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Getaway contents in January 2016

TRAVEL

COLUMNS

- 7 FIRST THINGS FIRST Time runs – and fast. Planning makes all the difference, says Sonya Schoeman
- 9 THE TRAVELLER
 Giving money isn't
 always the kindest
 thing to do, discovers
 Darrel Bristow-Bovey

ESCAPE

- 10 INBOX Your thoughts, your views and last month's winners
- 12 WISH YOU
 WERE HERE
 Hot and cold: from the
 golden beaches of Bazaruto
 to an icy Antarctic island
- 16 NEWS
 The one destination you
 MUST visit in 2016. What are
 midweek microadventures?
 Find out. 10 events worth
 getting to
- 22 MASTERCLASS

 Top photographers tell you how to take your images to the next level

WILDLIFE LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT

These incredible perspectives of wildlife will blow your mind.
By Kym and Tonya Illman

68

YOUR ULTIMATE 2016 CHILL LIST

Top travellers, journos and bloggers share 21 relaxing ideas that need to be on your radar this year 78

LAST-CHANCE BATOKA GORGE

Scott Ramsay almost died rafting Africa's wildest white waters one last time (or so he thought)

86

ITALIAN FOOD TOUR

Ever dreamt of tasting Italy's most famous treats in situ? This is that trip. By **Nikki Werner**

94

WATER CONSERVATION

Water is the conservation theme of the year. We look at three awesome river and ocean initiatives

A curious sub-adult lion paws at a monopod dangling from photographers Kym and Tonya Illman's safari vehicle. Using extraordinary techniques and remote-controlled cameras, the couple spent years capturing some of the most unique wildlife images ever seen. See more on page 62.

COVER Teagan Cunniffe THIS PHOTOGRAPH Kym and Tonya Illman

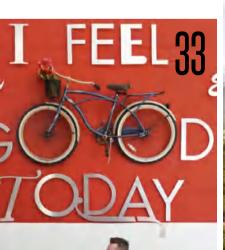


CHECK IN

- 33 HOTEL OF THE MONTH Architect Cameron Finnie is all about Durban. Here is his favourite hotel
- 36 ON THE CHART
 The secret to a good
 Valentine's is: book
 now! Pippa de Bruyn
 reviews Franschhoek
- 43 HOT SPOTS Four ultra-affordable group getaways
- 45 HOTEL NEWS New spots in the Waterberg and Swakopmund

TRAVEL BITES

46 FOOD
These four things should be on your wish list, says food editor Nikki Werner.
PLUS 10 essential self-catering items



Hotel 64

on Gordon







ON TRACK

- 52 TRIPPING
 Kenyan photographer
 Mutua Matheka takes
 a wild trip to Lake
 Natron. PLUS use this
 couple's guide to drive
 from SA to Kenya
- 59 GEAR
 Use these tests to buy your own hammock

GUIDE

127 OUDTSHOORN
It's the KKNK soon.
Vuyi Qubeka explores
the town that hosts
this festival

COMPETITIONS

26 GALLERY
Find out who won
our 'Africa by Africans'
photo competition







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FROM THE EDITOR

FIRST THINGS FIRST

SONYA SCHOEMAN



CONTRIBUTORS



MUTUA MATHEKA Travel junkie Mutua is fond of ruining his Landie, trying to take it as near to cliffs as possible. His blood is Kenyan and roots African.

He hopes to document every city in Africa with photos before he dies. Until then, you will most likely find him off the beaten path trying to capture the beauty in the mundane. Read about his 4x4 trip to Lake Natron on page 52.



NIKKI WERNER

The joyousness with which the Italians approach mealtimes, their deep understanding of food as an expression of culture and a feeling that everyone is entitled to eat well are what draw Nikki Werner back to Italy every time. She is still adapting to life without gnocco fritto (see page 86), siestas and aperitivo hour.



CHRIS DAVIES
As a kid, Chris Davies spent many happy hours splashing around in rivers as he tagged along with his zoology professor father on sampling trips all over SA. When the chance came to paddle the Olifants River in Lutzville with Explore4Knowledge's youth education project, he jumped right in. Read all about it on page 94.

Time is on our side

Our time on Earth may be finite, but that doesn't mean we can't make more of it

When I was young, I never planned. My life felt like it rolled out before me like those endless Serengeti plains, forever another Champagne field stretching out ahead. But as I got older, as one does, and life was loaded with more responsibility, I came to accept the wagging-fingered truth of my grandmother, mother and older sister: planning is everything. Because time is a precious commodity.

A few friends I know have opted to take jobs that offer less money in return for owning more of their hours. Recently, when I took two days off, conveniently sandwiching a weekend, I saw their point. Or rather, I felt their point. I floated on my back in a tidal pool, thinking about nothing at all but the pleasure of the ice-cold water on my skin. Then I got out and lay on the hot stones, thinking about nothing at all but the pleasure of the sun baking my back. And then I ate a delicious sustainable seafood soup. And drank a glass of wine. Then I went to bed. And when I woke up, I felt the pleasure of three whole more days in which I had no pressing thing to do.

Pleasure must be grabbed greedily with both hands. Having time is the great enabler of this, and this year I want more of that. Don't you?

So I'm all for the trend of taking more breaks for fewer days, closer to home. This is why in this issue we've focused on giving you some ideas on where you can go throughout the year to relax. Places close to home, inspired by trends and other avid travellers – because we all travel differently. Read 'Top Chill Spots for 2016' on page 68.

Time is also what it takes to perfect an art. Take the Illmans, for instance. These two amateur photographers began

taking pictures of wildlife 15 years ago. Recently, they released a book on their photography. Look at their images on page 62. Also check out the invaluable tips given by five more top South African photographers on our Masterclass pages (page 22).

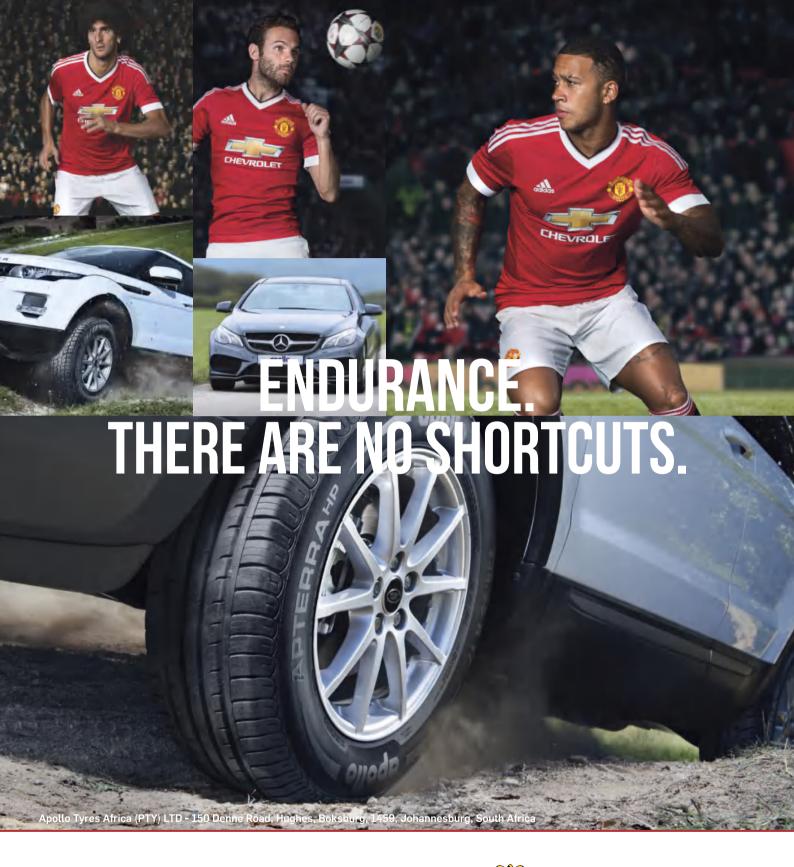
Finally, we need to take time to assess what's important as we go into the year. 2016's big conservation theme is water. Recently Joburg set limits for consumption, and Cape Town will soon follow suit (might have already done by the time you read this). There are droughts the world over. For this reason we've also given you a conservation read this issue: three water-related projects that deserve our support. Read about them on page 94.

Another big 2016 theme for SA is race: this was most sharply expressed in the Fees Must Fall campaign. I love travelling in my country: my experiences have shown South Africans to be warm. But I've come to realise being white plays a big part. It's sad to say, our travel journalists of colour bump up against closed attitudes consistently (read Vuyi Qubeka's story on Oudtshoorn on page 127). Prejudice spills over into everything, and blights the pleasure of travel, and we need to find ways to address it.

I hope you've planned some enjoyable holidays for yourself this year. Go on: carve out that time for yourself. We promise to keep bringing you plenty of great ideas about how to fill that glorious time. Happy 2016.



TO OUR READERS We want to hear your views. Mail us at editor@getaway.co.za







COLUMN

THE TRAVELLER

DARREL BRISTOW-BOVEY



Run, tourist, run

On the sticky streets of Jaipur, our columnist barrels after a boy and his money and his self-respect

If this were a movie it would start with me chasing a 10-year-old boy through the backstreets of Jaipur, trying to take money off him. He hadn't stolen it from me, it was his money, but I thundered after him in hot pursuit, my big stupid shorts flapping around my knees, sweat flying from my brow like foam from a rabid dog.

'Come back here!' I yelled, but he didn't.

We barrelled down crowded alleyways, splashed through streams of suspicious liquids, weaved between guys carrying heaps of cloth and bicycle wheels, women balancing piles there are on Earth. It feels as though everyone who has ever lived is on the street with you, all doing something mysterious but vitally important. Everyone is mending or hammering or cooking or bending or tweezing or snipping. It's a three-ring circus of industry and enterprise, like one of those panoramic children's picture books you could spend hours poring over and see something new every time you looked.

A kid approached me with a ratty old tennis ball. He had sandals made of rope and a T-shirt with Thor on the front, and we played ball a while. Every

'The vehicles just parted around him as though he were a half-pint Moses in a metallic Red Sea'

of chapattis, old men with sewing machines strapped to their backs, young men on mopeds encased in Tupperware. He had a low centre of gravity and he was on home turf; I was never going to catch him.

An hour earlier I'd been standing in the main street of Jaipur, repeatedly peeling my shirt from my sweaty skin, watching my film crew shoot an insert on a traffic island. The scooters and tuk-tuks poured by on either side like metal rivers. Until you've been to India you have no idea how many people

time it bounced into the road the kid would run headlong after it and I'd yell and shut my eyes but the vehicles just parted around him as though he were a half-pint Moses in a metallic Red Sea.

It was too hot to play for long, but we had fun and he showed me a trick involving a bottle cap that I practise every morning but still haven't mastered. Rahul, our local fixer, was watching us. Rahul always fretted that we'd be pickpocketed or harassed, so I waved to him to tell him it was all okay.

The guys were wrapping up so I turned to my new friend and gravely shook his hand and thanked him for his company. He grinned and wondered if I might have a dollar to spare.

The kid looked hungry, and I'd taken up a good chunk of his time so I thought that was fair, but the smallest note I had was a \$10 bill. I hesitated, but then I thought, 'Don't be a cheapskate.' Feeling mighty benevolent, I handed it over.

I strolled towards Rahul, pleased with myself. I wasn't some tightwad tourist – I was a benefactor! I spread happiness! But Rahul looked away, and I could see he wanted to say something but thought it wasn't his place.

'What?' I said. He shook his head, but I pressed him.

'That boy's father maybe works 11 hours a day,' said Rahul reluctantly. 'And he makes very little but it's honest and feeds his family, so he has respect. You have just given his son, for free, the same amount it takes him three days to earn. So Mr Darrel, how does his son respect him now?'

I stared at Rahul and I wanted to argue but the shame was too much, and I turned on my heel and chased after the kid. I think I knew I wouldn't catch him; I think I was just trying to run from the embarrassment of being me. @

INDIAN INKLINGS

A FEW WHOLLY RANDOM FACTS

1. Jaipur has retained the name 'The Pink City' ever since its buildings were painted the colour in 1876 to welcome Edward, Prince of Wales.

2. More people have a cell phone than a toilet in India. The 'No toilet no bride' campaign has been going since 2005 in north India to encourage men to sort out their sanitation.

3. Rahul is a popular boy's name in India. Its meanings are many, from 'conqueror of all miseries' and 'traveller' to 'offspring of lightning'.



INBOX

TRAVELLERS SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS

WINNING LETTER

A top-down approach to Kruger

Having recently moved into the ranks of the semi-retired, and with time on my hands, I was inspired by an article in *Getaway* from September 2014 to take a leisurely road trip from the most northern gate in the Kruger National Park and exit at Malelane.

At the top of my bucket list was a visit to Crook's Corner, and we were delighted when we got there, having driven along the Luvuvhu River and experiencing wonderful sightings of nyala along the way.

Our first night in the park was spent at Punda Maria and while the camp is getting a little long in the tooth, we were very impressed with the professional and friendly staff at reception and in the camp in general.

As per the article, we then proceeded south, spending the next night at Shingwedzi, and

once again we were blown away by the quality of the camp, which has recently been rebuilt following the floods of 2013.

The next night was spent at Mopani, clearly the best-kept secret of the KNP. Our bungalow overlooked Pioneer Dam and the birdlife was just out of this world. Once again, the quality and friendliness of the staff was most impressive and the camp was in a really good state of upkeep.

Moving south, our stops were Letaba, Satara and Skukuza, and our final night was at Berg-en-Dal, another jewel of a camp.

Our trip was planned around hoping to get to the park in time for the first rains, but that was not to be, and we experienced the most incredible heat along the way – but air-conditioned accommodation at all the camps took care of most of the heat.

The debate around whether to start at the top or bottom will continue but our experience was wonderful. The north has little traffic, fewer animals but great birdlife. The middle was rather desolate and the south was full of animals and people!

All in all, a great trip and while having read various articles around how the park has deteriorated over the years, our experience was totally the opposite.

As a quasi-state entity, the leadership of SANParks are to be congratulated on a job well done.

TRIPMS

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What was very clear to us was that the top leadership of the Kruger National Park had a clear vision and this had been well communicated to the entire staff. As a result, we have a world-class asset that is working and continues to attract plenty of international visitors.

- Rod Cairns, Sandton

WIN! Rod wins the latest hiking bag in the First Ascent range, worth R1 099! The Atlas 35L backpack has walking pole loops, compression straps and easy-access pockets for a great hike. Email your letters to editor@getaway.co.za.





During August, our first evening on a 5 000-kilometre trip around South Africa on motorbikes was Rhodes. This was via Naude's Nek, which I rode three times after discovering I had dropped my brand-new rain suit. All was in vain – I did not find it. The following morning our daughter walked into our room, rain suit in hand.

Via your extensive coverage, I would again love to thank Mr and Mrs Naude for their amazing effort. Mr Naude found the rain suit and the following morning asked his wife to 'find the biker' over the pass. Besides handing over the precious item (used extensively during the trip), Mrs Naude promptly vanished after being profusely thanked by Tami.

Our amazing trip was truly enhanced by their extremely thoughtful and generous efforts. Besides seeing just on 5 000 kilometres of magic scenery and more than 50 towns, it was the Naudes that gave us that extra 'feel-good' factor that makes travel so truly special.

- Derek and Angela Moult, Port Shepstone

Thank you for this article (Dog-day afternoons, April 2015), it's always good to know about pet-friendly places. Unfortunately, compared to the likes of the UK, Europe and USA, South Africa is severely lacking in pet-friendly accommodation and facilities. – TRACY LYLE



Shelina Samujh, from Johannesburg, snapped the textures of this Kokerboom tree in Namibia.



WIN! Send us your snap of the month and win a R400 Outdoor Warehouse gift voucher. outdoorwarehouse.co.za

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FROM ALL-EXPENSES-PAID HOLIDAYS TO GEAR GALORE, THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING TO WIN FOR GETAWAY READERS



A three-night stay for two at Shamwari Game Reserve

'My hubby and I have just got married and have been looking for somewhere to go on honeymoon! I am still so shocked! I really can't believe it.'

- Remona Young



A trip for two to the Jameson Vic Falls Carnival

'I am overwhelmed and really excited. Looking forward to this outing!' - Ofentse Modisakeng



Tickets to the Banff Mountain Film Festival

'I was blown away by what I saw; the films were incredible and it has reawakened the adventurous spirit in me. We really had a great time!'

- Kirsten Bohle



Wolverine Black Ledge hiking shoes

'I didn't expect to be a winner! I received the shoes and they are fantastic. I'm sure I'm going to enjoy them.' - Jacques Groenewald

THIS STORY WON OUR #TELLBETTERSTORIES COMPETITION

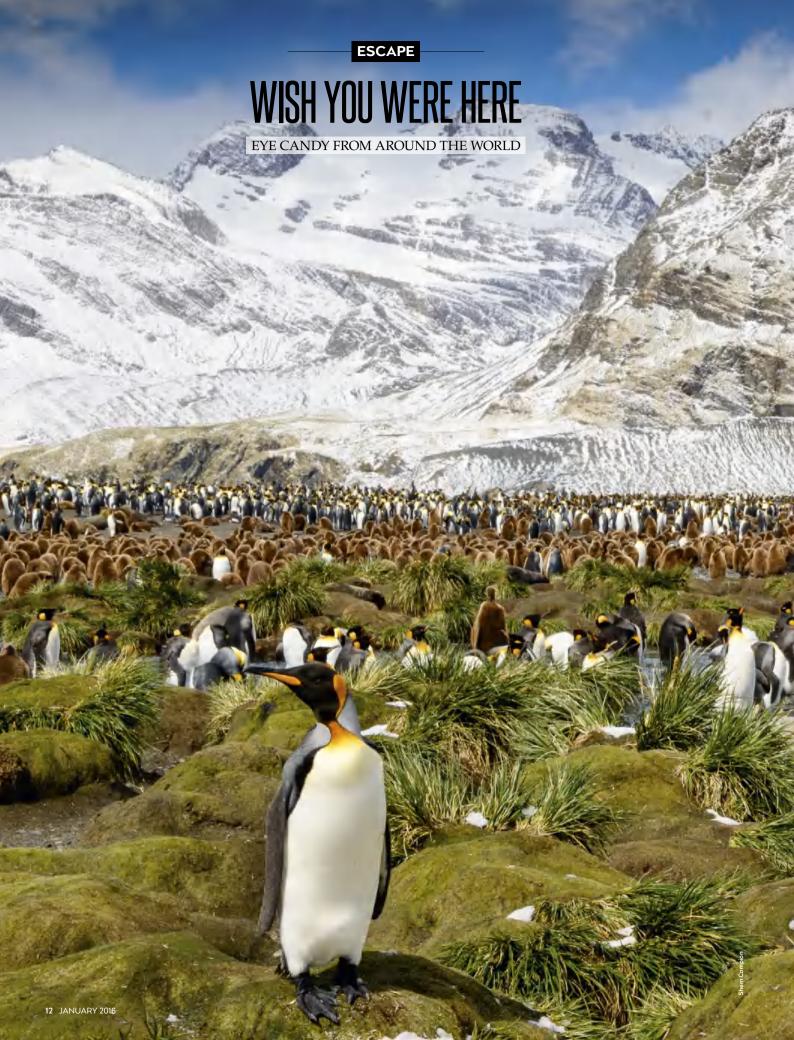
Our recent #tellbetterstories competition drew more entries than ever! Although it was a very hard decision, the prize of a SANParksand Toyota-sponsored road trip went to Pamela Schwikkard from *Cape Town for this story...*

The shapes of the trees start emerging out of the dawn as we dunk our rusks and whisper about the possibility of seeing wild dogs on Bume Road. As we leave Biyamiti, an owl merges with the greys of dawn. It rapidly gets lighter but the passing trees and grasses do not betray any outlines. Just as I am reconciling myself to a dogless morning - it steps into the road. Not a dog, but a magnificent leopard. He glances over his shoulder and continues his territorial walk down the dirt road. He walks in diagonal lines from side to side, scratching and spraying, then stops in the middle of the road and glances at us over his magnificent tail, then slips off to his hidden world in the brush. We drive on, greeting the confident spurfowl who seem to be in no hurry to get out of our way.



Two lions on the wall of Mpondo Dam catch my eye. We watch for a while, but they are far away and seem content to nap, so we drive on. Over the backs of a small herd of waterbuck we see an elephant breeding herd come down to the dam; a youngster practises a fierce trumpet as he passes. Still looking for those elusive wild dogs, we turn back onto the main dirt track

where we soon distract two rhino - who stop their posing and move on. We turn back to the dam to see if the lions have come closer to the road. No lions, the breeding herd seems to have chased them off. My companions tolerate my sighing and lamenting as we leave the dam and then there they are! Two battle-worn brothers in the middle of the road.





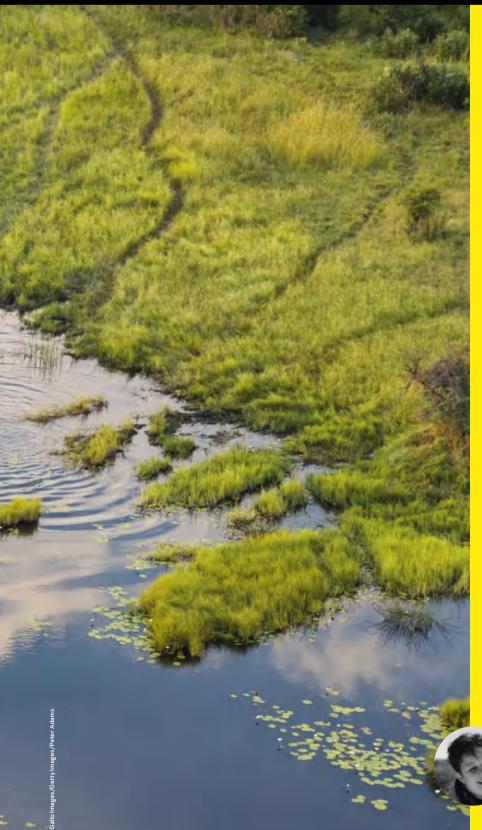




NEWS

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW





BOTSWANA INSIDER

AUTHOR LAURI KUBUITSILE HAS LIVED IN MAHALAPYE, 197 KILOMETRES NORTH OF GABORONE, FOR 26 YEARS. HERE ARE HER TOP FIVE THINGS TO DO IN THE COUNTRY

1. Old Phalatswe (Old Palapye)

Old Phalatswe was the modern town where the Bangwato tribe set up their capital from 1889 to 1902 before moving to Serowe. There you can see the ruins of the old London Missionary Society and foundations for many houses and the grave of Mma Bessie, Khama Ill's wife. The turn-off is between Lecheng and Malaka on the Malaka road which turns off the Martin's Drift road to the border with South Africa.

2. Phothopotho waterfalls

While you're at Old Phalatswe, put on some walking shoes, take a picnic and head up the dry river bed to the Phothophotho waterfalls. You can find the river behind the ruins of the mission house down the hill. It's a gorgeous walk that ends in a natural amphitheatre.

3. The southernmost naturally occurring baobab tree – Mahalapye

The tree is located in Mahalapye just after entering from the south; it's best to ask for directions once you arrive as it's a bit tricky to find. The location is now fenced and, the last time I was there, it had a sign. When you're done, stop by Kaytee's (Gaborone Rd, +267-471-0795) on the A1 and get fat *magwinya* (like vetkoek), fresh chips, and Setswana chicken.

4. The best hamburgers – Motsana, Maun

Motsana is located between Audi Circle and the University of Botswana on the road out of town towards the Delta. They come with homemade mayonnaise and chutneys, which should be piled on to excess. +267-722-4144

5. The Khama III Memorial Museum – Serowe

The museum has detailed background documents of the Khama family and houses personal effects of Botswana's most influential writer, Bessie Head. If you're lucky, you'll get a tour by the curator, a member of the Bangwato royal family who was a friend of hers. He also helped to start the museum. Be nice to him. Give him a big tip; curators are pathologically underpaid in Botswana. Museum Road, Serowe. +267-463-0519

Lauri Kubuitsile is a full-time, award-winning writer living in Mahalapye, Botswana. Her next book, *The Scattering* – a historical novel about the genocide of the Herero people – will be coming out in May 2016, published by Umuzi (Penguin Random House South Africa).



Microadventures can be as complicated or simple as you want. The main idea is to try something new and go somewhere different. Here are five ideas to get you started: **JOHANNESBURG Ever been inner-city** camping (trailer parks excluded)? Pitch a tent on a Jozi high-rise building and take in the view of the city before falling asleep under the night sky. Venues change regularly. From R100 pp if you have your own tent and bedding

and from R150 pp if you require equipment. Bring your own food. (Min three, max 30). 011-614-0163, curiocitybackpackers. com

PORT ELIZABETH

Addo Elephant National Park is a 30-minute drive from PE, making it a perfect weekday wildlife escape. Leave work a little early and drive either the Mbotyi and Vukani loop (where there is a good chance of spotting lion) and if you're up early the

following day, there's a good game drive waiting for you on the way back. Camping is from R285 for two (max four) and forest cabins are from R870 for two. 042-233-8600, addoenguiries@ sanparks.org

CAPE TOWN

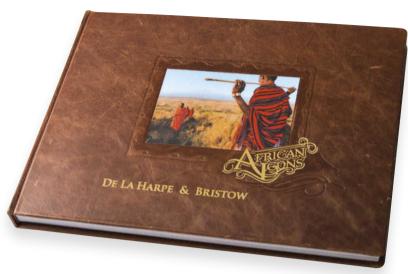
Spend two nights in a houseboat in Kraalbaai in the West Coast National Park. It's an hour's drive from Cape Town, which means you can be in your board shorts braaiing on the aft deck before the sun goes

down. Self-catering From R2300 per night (sleeps six). 021-526-0432, kraalbaaihouseboats. co.za

DURBAN

Every year, up to three million barn swallows travel up to 10 000 kilometres from Europe to roost on our shores. If you live in Durban, you only have to travel 30 kilometres north to Mount Moreland, near Umdloti, to see them. The spectacle takes place every day at sunset from September to April perfect for an afterwork sojourn. Get there half an hour before sunset, and bring your own chairs, picnic, binoculars and mozzie cream. Entry is R10 pp. 031-568-1557, barnswallow.co.za **TRY THIS**

Let the kids decide where to go, what to eat and how to get there (within reason). Handing over control gives you a new perspective and children tend to be more curious.



COLLECTOR'S PIECE

Coffee-table books about Africa are pretty ubiquitous, but what sets *African Icons* apart is not only the in-depth writing, but the interactive content. QR codes (those squiggly squares one sees on tickets and adverts) appear in the top corners of various pages in the book. Once you have a QR app installed on your smart device, these codes can be scanned and a link takes you to the *African Icons* website where videos about the corresponding chapter and more information can be found. The book, by travel writer and former *Getaway* editor David Bristow and photographers Roger and Pat de la Harpe, showcases 21 of the most beguiling sights on the continent, including the Congo Basin, stone churches of Ethiopia, Table Mountain, the Okavango Delta and whale sharks in Tanzania. Each book is hand-bound in leather and includes detailed storytelling, generous images as well as lodge reviews. **R3500**, *africanicons.*co.za



ONE CARD, 17 CURRENCIES

No one uses travel cheques anymore and the problem with using some travel cards is that only main currencies (such as pounds and dollars) are available. This means if you go to a country such as Thailand, you pay double the conversion fees – from rand to dollars to baht. Now savvy travellers can load up to 17 currencies onto the Bidvest Bank Mastercard Multi-Currency World Currency Card. Two cards are issued for safety reasons (stash one in your socks and keep the other on you), and if lost it's replaced on location. It's convenient for those travelling between currencies such as visiting Paris after a trip to London. Check with your bank to compare conversion rates and card charges to see if getting the card is the right financial option for your trip. It's a handy service for young adults travelling on a gap year or flitting around the globe on Contiki. The 17 currencies include the Australian and New Zealand dollar, the Mauritian and Indian rupee, Argentine peso and Thai baht. bidvestbank.co.za

RYAN SANDES SHARES ONE OF HIS RECENT MICRO-ADVENTURES

South Africa's trail runner extraordinaire likes his ceiling spangled with stars

'Our modern city lifestyles have become so fast-paced and busy that many of us have lost our connection with nature. For me it is so important to have that direct interaction with the outdoors, otherwise I will go crazy. Living in Cape Town I am really lucky to have so many options. Last week a few friends and I drove to Sanddrif in the Cederberg, hiked through the Wolfberg Cracks and slept under the Wolfberg Arch. It felt pretty surreal to be up there under the stars, drinking a cup of coffee with dead silence around us. We hiked back down the following morning and I felt completely recharged from just spending one night under the stars. It was a three-hour drive to Sanddrif followed by a three-and-a-half-hour hike to the arch and the same return.'

REASONS TO GET OUT THERE DURING EVERY SEASON Beer, wine, poetry, triathlons ... these events act as entry points to some of our country's most interesting spots

SUMMER

MAGOEBASKLOOF BERRY FESTIVAL HAENERTSBURG, LIMPOPO

6 – 7 February

It's all very berry at this time of year in this misty, gentle village en route to Kruger. Pick your own berries, sample berry products, eat berry pie and drink berry wine. There will also be organic cheeses, crafts, books, a festival trail run, a fun run and cute animals. **D0 IT** Entry is free. berryfestival.co.za

CLARENS CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL CLARENS, FREE STATE

26 – 27 February
Set in the foothills of the
Maluti Mountains, this annual
celebration of all things hoppy
and zingy offers 100 types of
small-batch beers, ciders and
other brews. There will
be food, crafts and
music (including
Jaryd Smith,
Lonestar Estate and
The Motherland) as
well as brew masters
to show you how

AUTUMN

TRIROCK CRADLE OF HUMANKIND 2016

MULDERSDRIFT, GAUTENG

20 March

This triathlon takes in some of the continent's most anthropologically important sites. Starting in the Swartkop koppie area, next to the Cradle of Humankind, the race includes a 1,9-kilometre swim in Lake Heritage, which has Africa's largest handmade stone dam wall, a three-lap 90-kilometre cycle and a 21-kilometre run through the area – ending in the Cradle Moon Conservancy. **D0 IT** From R1 450 pp. trirock-cradleofhumankind.com

SEDGEFIELD SLOW FESTIVAL SEDGEFIELD, WESTERN CAPE

24 - 27 March

Sedgefield is so super-chilled, it's South Africa's only official Cittaslow town – an

Cittaslow town – an international status that recognises leisurely, wholesome, fun living. This festival epitomises that: there's volleyball,

trail runs, beer pong, raft building, blindfolded biking, sand-sculpting, picnics, barefoot bowls, chess tournaments and more.

DO IT Entry free. slowfestival.co.za

WINTER

DULLSTROOM WINTER FESTIVAL

DULLSTROOM, MPUMALANGA

8 - 10 July

Okay, so there's no snow or skiing, but as one of the country's most loved short-break destinations, Dullstroom piles it on during July. Music is a central focus, with top South African artists performing at various venues in the town. There are also craft and food stalls, whisky and chocolate pairings, two trail runs

(5km and 10km) and two mountain-biking races (8km and 27km). It gets cold, so pack those woolly socks and beanies.

D0 IT From R100 pp for the main concert. dullstroomwinterfestival.com

AMATHOLE ADVENTURE HOGSBACK, EASTERN CAPE

5 - 9 August

This fully supported, five-day slackpacking cycle tour is perfect for those who want to pedal in the wild but aren't quite Tour de France material. Beginning with an overnight stay in Hogsback, the SlowRiders folk will guide you on this 200-kilometre adventure through the Amathole Mountain forests.

DO IT From R7 200 pp (group discounts available), slowridingza.com

SA ON TAP CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL DURBAN, KWAZULU-NATAL

30 July

Durbs doesn't really do winter – which is a bonus if sipping a cold beer while watching the Indian Ocean feels like Nirvana to you. Hailed as SA's biggest craft beer festival, it features over 120 tipples, food trucks and a child-minding area. **DO IT** From R115 pp, saontap.co.za

SPRING

SOWETO WINE FESTIVAL GAUTENG

2 - 4 September

This three-day celebration of goodness in a glass showcases some of the country's top boutique vineyards as well as a variety of food stalls – many of them with roots in Soweto. Besides tastings and tippling, there's also local fashion, art and decor on sale – think fixie bikes, hip T-shirts, bright prints and vintage jewellery. And, of course, there's local music. **DO IT** From R150 pp per day. sowetowinefestival.co.za

CELLAR RATS WINE FESTIVAL MAGALIESBERG, GAUTENG

4 September

The Magaliesberg may not be a wine-producing region, but that doesn't mean this part of the country doesn't know a thing or two about Pinotage and picnics. Set on the banks of the Magalies River under shady trees - and just 45 minutes from Johannesburg the festival is all about kicking back while knocking one back with friends and family. Picnic baskets are for sale and there are activities to keep the small ones entertained. DO IT From R115 pp.

MACUFE BLOEMFONTEIN, FREE STATE

winefestival.co.za

First weekend of October, tbc
To the uninitiated, the Free State
might seem to comprise of
nothing but plains and mielie
fields. But did you know one

of its main crops is

asparagus? And that it has a thriving arts scene? The 10-day Mangaung African Cultural Festival (shortened to Macufe) showcases everything

from kwaito, jazz and R&B to rock, classical music, dance, theatre, fine art and crafts. **D0 IT** Ticket price tbc,

macufe.co.za

to make your own.

DO IT From R95 pp.

clarenscraftbeerfest.com



BLADE OF GLORY

The Morakniv Tactical SRT fixed-blade knife has a thick carbon steel blade covered in an anticorrosive black coating for better longevity. Use it on a bush hike or for dicing potatoes for the potjie. The spine of the blade has a rough grind to make it compatible with a flint striker (about R120, sold separately) to start a fire when the matches are wet. The comfortable, rubberised ergonomic handle guarantees a more controlled grip, preventing the hand from slipping. The black sheath also features belt loops to keep it at hand on your next adventure. R1 350, campandclimb.co.za



APPY TRAVELLER

Have sea sense – wherever you are



The Sassi (Southern African Sustainable

Seafood Initiative) app from WWF should be on every South African phone. Most of us are familiar with the green, orange and red classification system used to indicate the threat posed to our marine stocks, and the app provides a convenient reference that you can whip out of your pocket at any time. It's essentially a long list with a sobering number of red (severely threatened) and orange (depleted) icons which make up 75 of the 112 species covered. There's a write-up on each and, where applicable, info on the different types of fishing methods that pose particular concern. Free on Android, BlackBerry and iOS, or visit wwfsassi.co.za for more on the state of our oceans.

Guide

Good Good Fish Guide does much the same as the Sassi app, but,

developed by the UK Marine Conservation Society, it focuses on species found in northern hemisphere and European waters. The picture is no less bleak, with 100 of the 127 species listed as red or yellow (the latter is favoured instead of orange). As with Sassi, there are pictures and short write-ups on each species, and links the website for more detailed information on fishing areas, methods and sustainable seafood practices. There's also an A3 fish guide to download and print, and a wealth of material on the plight of marine life worldwide. Free on Android and iOS, or online at mcsuk.org.

MASTERCLASS

TAKE THE PERFECT PICTURE





MORKEL ERASMUS, WILDLIFE morkelerasmus.com

Best advice received: invest in the best lenses

Do this before you spend more money on better cameras. Learn to understand the fall of light on your subjects.

My advice: be in the moment

Enjoy what you're doing. Sometimes put down the camera. Not every amazing sighting is a good

photographic opportunity, and the privilege we have of spending time out in the bush often is easily taken for granted. When you do have a potentially good photographic sighting – know your gear intimately, learn to be patient and learn to predict the animal's behaviour ... this will improve your chances of nailing the shot.



2 KOOS VAN DER LENDE, LANDSCAPE

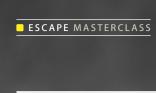
delende.com

Best advice received: preparation is key

The term 'crap in, crap out' means that if you start with the wrong foundation, nothing will flow to a perfect shot. Instead you'll have constant adjusting and compromise to get a mediocre end result. The thought process and physical side of the shoot need to be prepared well before the shoot.

My advice: go for the one great shot

Take an amazing photograph rather than two or three mediocre ones. Scout for that excellent photograph before the actual shoot. Determine the angle, equipment and time of the shoot beforehand. Do the set-up well in advance and see how the light unfolds so you can shoot at the perfect time. The Shepherd's Tree (pictured above) is a distinctive tree with its white trunk. I lit it up with eight reflective boards just after sunrise so that the trunk would stand out more. Always use a tripod to make sure you can use the desired aperture without compromise and camera shake. >



KARIN SCHERMBRUCKER, SOCIAL AND DOCUMENTARY

slingshotmedia.co.za

Best advice received: the relationship with the subject is key

It's easy to become absorbed in the technicalities behind an image but when photographing people, it's the relationship that is crucial. Prioritising that translates into a great image. I love the quote by James Nachtwey: 'I try to use whatever I know about photography to be of service to the people I'm photographing.' My advice: photographing people is about getting to know them Remain flexible and humble, be patient and love the people you get to meet. Passion, willingness and enthusiasm will always set you apart. Never forget that photographing people is really





FIONA AYERST, UNDERWATER fionaayerst.com

Best advice received: get close And then get closer.

all about getting to know them.

My advice: make money by diversifying your craft

Think out of the box as to how to make money out of underwater images – usually lifestyle sells on land and it sells in the water too. If you can film then hire yourself out as a video assistant. If you can write or teach, then do that. Be different and vary your subjects and destinations so that photo editors can come to you for anything. Don't try to own all the

biggest and latest equipment. Master the gear you have and make it work for you. 6





The Mazda CX-5 is an SUV with the agility and performance of a sports car. This is revealed in its wide variety of engines that deliver up to 141kW of power and 256Nm torque. And thanks to SKYACTIV technology, this immense performance requires minimal fuel. The CX-5 also offers features like MZD Connect as standard, while the Navigation System is available on the Akera and Individual models.









COMPETITION

GETAWAY GALLERY

OUR 'AFRICA BY AFRICANS' PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



WINNER SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE?

We visited a local Masai community on a recent trip to OI Donyo Lodge near Chyulu Hills, between Tsavo East and Amboseli national parks, Kenya. This picture of a Masai woman laughing at my friend Penny as she attempted to dance shows how the joy of dance translates the same across the African continent.

- Nicole Ackermann, Sandton

Canon 600D, Canon 55-250mm f/4-5.6, ISO 400, f/5.6, 1/400 sec

NICOLE'S STORY:

For as long as I can remember I have been dogmatic in my pursuit to make things beautiful – from cutting up my curtains as a five-year-old, to angsty art experiments as a teenager, to a career in directing television commercials. I studied film and screenwriting at Wits, and did a short stint at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. As a film geek, I naturally have a deep love for photography – but it was my husband who introduced me to a whole new way of using the camera. My world is about perfect control of the image, and I find the unpredictably of Africa blissfully liberating.

NICOLE HAS WON A WEEK ON REUNION ISLAND FOR TWO WORTH R54 000

THE PRIZE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- · return flights for two from OR Tambo to Reunion*,
- full-board accommodation for two sharing for six nights in three- and four-star establishments,
- car hire for the duration of the trip,
- a range of activities, including an ultralight ride, exploring the lava tubes, a trip to the tropical gardens and a sunset boat cruise.
- * For terms and conditions of the prize, see *getaway.co.za/ photo/getaway-gallery-competition*







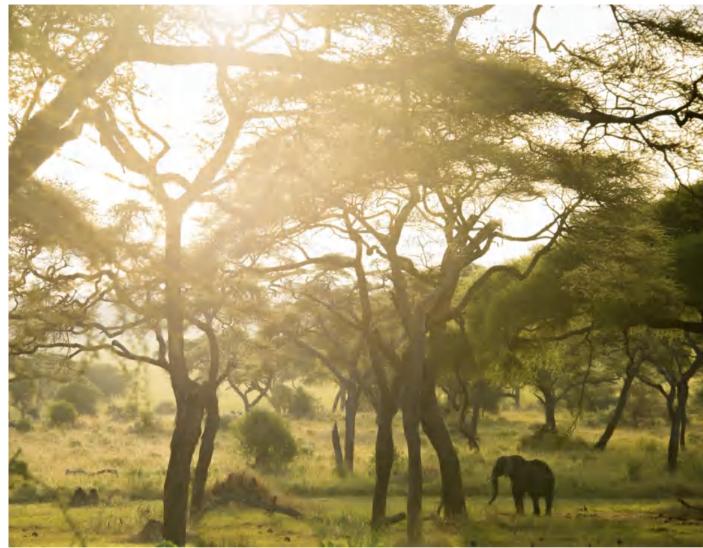


SECOND PLACE The promise of rain

Etosha is hot, unforgiving land for most of the year. However, towards the end of November a transformation happens – clouds start to form, moisture is tangible in the air, and storms start to build across the endless horizon. Here, a herd of gemsbok (oryx) move across the vast Etosha Pan in the direction of the first real summer storms, making for an atmospheric scene as they faces the elements. – **By Morkel Erasmus, Secunda**

Nikon D800, Nikkor 70-200mm f2.8 VR-II, ISO 900, f/8, 1/400 sec





THIRD PLACE GIANT AMONG GIANTS

I was in Tarangire National Park, Tanzania, which is known for its giant trees and baobabs. Early one morning, a herd of elephants came to drink at the waterhole. The sun pierced through the giant acacias towering over the elephants. I saw this opportunity to show just how big the trees in the park are when one of the elephants ventured off to the side. – By Kerry de Bruyn, Johannesburg

Nikon D600, Nikkor 28-300mm f/3.5-5.6, ISO 800, f/9, 1/500 sec

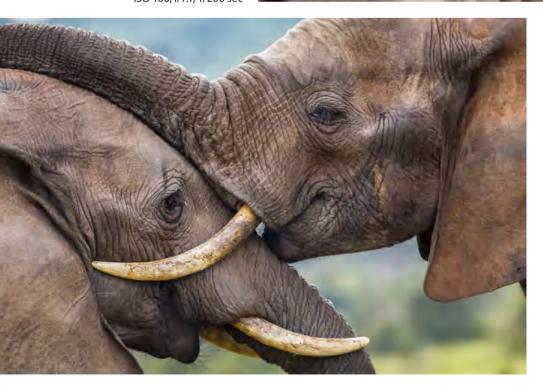


FOURTH PLACE THE COST OF TRAVEL

I titled this photograph 'The Cost of Travel' as it's a striking reminder of what goes on behind the scenes of our wonderful holidays. The picture was taken outside the liquor store in the main town of Chidenguele, Mozambique, where the thematic flow of red and the movement of the young boy's labour caught my eye.

– By Clinton L Rautenbach, Pietermaritzburg

Canon 6D, Zeiss 21mm f/2.8, ISO 100, f/7.1, 1/200 sec



FIFTH PLACE

TAKE CARE, AFRICA IS ALL WE HAVE

While travelling through Addo Elephant National Park in the Eastern Cape, I came across these two young bull elephants. They were gracefully entwined in perfect harmony; one of the most tender and intimate moments I have ever seen between two such giants. They remained like that for some time, almost as if in a communicative trance of body and mind. What they were communicating we will never know, but it is up to us as humans to ensure that this spirit of Africa endures for all. It certainly got me thinking.

- By John Vosloo, Sundays River Valley

Canon 70D, Sigma 150-600mm, ISO 400, f/6.3, 1/200 sec

GETAWAY GALLERY 2016 ANNOUNCEMENT

CALL FOR IMAGES

As of next month, we start the brand new 2016 Getaway Gallery competition. Prize details will be announced in the February issue, so get your entries in!

HOW TO ENTER

Email your images (about 1MB, maximum five per month) to gallery@getaway.co.za. Include a title, information on how and when you took each photograph and details of the camera and lens model used. See getaway.co.za/photo/send-us-yourphotos for full guidelines.



We breathe green and win gold. Drop by, we're waiting for you



SITUATED NEAR PIKETBERG ON THE N7 Discover the Green Heartbeat of the Swartland

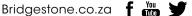
www.orgderac.co.za | www.facebook.com/OrgderacWines | twitter.com/OrgdeRacWines

Not For Sale To Persons Under The Age Of 18













HOTEL OF THE MONTH

YOUR VIP GUIDE TO THE SWEET SPOTS



EXPERIENCES DON'T NEED TO COST BIG BUCKS

You have friends visiting you from Europe, what hotel would you recommend?

Hotel 64 on Gordon is very cool. It's in a great area and it's close to local amenities. It's also reasonably priced and I think that's what you're looking for when you come to Durban – something a little more laidback. It's quite central to Florida Road too and there are a variety of things, from nightclubs to coffee shops to places to go and have a meal, a beer and that.

The design...

The space is well considered. A key aspect of the hotel is to be able to sit outside and relax and read a book, or even just open the doors out onto a protected area, even if the weather's horrible. In a place like Durban, you want to have somewhere outside. Throughout the year we have good weather and I think a lot of hotels don't take that opportunity to allow people to have a small outside space.

Does being an architect influence how you interact with space?

I think as architects, we're trained to look at a lot of things critically. I believe that if things are designed well, people won't really notice. But they notice the bad – maybe subconsciously – and that something feels off. Bad design is everywhere but good design is often invisible.

Best global destination for architecture?

Either Barcelona or Lisbon.
Both cities are beautiful and you can really feel that there has been great emphasis placed on the built environment. For example, in Barcelona there are huge areas that have hand-carved octagon-shaped paving stones. It just shows how the city >

values the pedestrian. I loved that. A great city will fund public spaces because it knows that it will then not only attract tourists but will allow for locals to want to live there too.

Architectural must-sees in Durban?

Durban is so varied that on one street you get anything from a typical Durban veranda house to a modern tower block. It's extraordinary. Walking eastwards from the beach towards Warwick Junction you can experience a diverse range of architecture: big, small, warehouses, offices, markets and Durban's old arcades that used to be popular in the 80s where people could sell their wares.

The best time to visit Durban

is... between May and June, when it's started to cool off a bit. The air becomes a little more crisp, the sea cleans up, the wind disappears and the surf is usually quite good [for bodyboarders].

Best bodyboarding spot?

Tricky question. There are a lot of secret spots that people would be angry about if I told you. But, if you're here on holiday and want to learn, there are great surf schools close to Moyo pier. The surf there is more manageable because it's protected by the harbour wall.

Tell us about Beset Durban?

The premise is to explore Durban through various public interventions where everything is on foot and free. We get someone who is informed and then unleash them on people who are just as interested. In South Africa we don't reward enough of our public spaces and places. On our first walk we had Leon Conradie talk about the work of Crofton & Benjamin (Derek Crofton and Issy Benjamin, celebrated architects with work around Durban) along the promenade. We had no idea what to expect and then 40 people arrived in the pouring rain.

Your best travel experience as a child?

I must have been about five or six. I went to Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando with my family. It was my first big trip on an aeroplane. It had a TV in the back and Liust remember thinking this has got to be the best thing that's ever happened: TV games and this little mini-TV, with controllers and stuff that I didn't have to share. Disney World is

STAY HERE **Hotel 64 On Gordon** in Morningside is located a minute's walk from vibey Florida Road, yet this modern and quirky hotel is set in quiet suburbia. B&B from R475 pp sharing. 031-312-8907 hotel64ongordon. co.za stupendous but the flight

FOR BEER

for me took the cake. @

S43 Brewery on Station Drive has a huge selection of beers. Its sister spot, Unity Bar, is the second place I would head to. They both serve S43 brews (plus a huge selection of other beers) and have great food and a really cool vibe. 031-303-2747, thatbrewingco.co.za, 031-201-3470, unitybar.co.za

S43 BREWERY **BOILER** ROOM CAFÉ **HOTEL 64 ON GORDON** ANTIQUE CAFÉ

Boiler Room Café is in

a warehouse and has great coffee. 031-312-9021, facebook.com/ boilerroomdurban The Bean Green Coffee Company in Davenport does an extraordinary cup. 031-201-8122, beangreen.co.za

FOR COFFEE...

FOR EATING & DRINKING... Antique Café at Churchill House has UNITY BAR AND BRASSERIE

SPIGA D'ORO SIDEBAR

a great courtyard, superb coffee and good food. 031-303-5959, churchillhouse. co.za Spiga d'Oro on Florida Road has been extended and now has a bar called Sidebar. 031-303-9511, spiga.co.za **Dropkick Murphy's** has cool gastro pub

stuff. 031-825-1858, dropkickmurphys.co.za

THE BEAN GREEN COFFEE COMPANY WINSTON



FOR MUSIC...

The Winston Pub is a live-music institution. facebook.com/TheWinstonPub The Chairman is probably the best place to go out. In terms of an interesting dialogue of the South African context, what they've done is amazing. 078-387-1408, the chairman live.com



Would you walk on the wild side - in these?

You wouldn't wear stilettos on a country stroll. So why fit your car with the wrong rubber? Continental's world-class tyres optimise efficiency by reducing rolling resistance: using less fuel makes our planet a greener place.

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When braking counts.

AVAILABLE AT:





CHECK IN

ON THE CHART

PUTTING TRIPADVISOR TO THE TEST, WE RATE THE BEST BEDS



Best small hotel and romantic retreat

ANGALA BOUTIOUE HOTEL

TripAdvisor No.4 of 58 B&B/Inn

It's quite a surprise coming to the end of the bumpy dirt track that twists up through the vineyards behind Vrede en Lust to find this contemporary glass box with sweeping valley views and stylish furnishings. The modern design – comprising just 11 rooms dotted in terraced grounds – sits remarkably easy in this natural idyll. Owners Peter and Tisha Cunnliffe clearly see Angala as a place of spiritual regeneration, encouraging the hosting of yoga and art retreats. It's a boutique hotel, not a B&B (as listed by TripAdvisor), the kind you don't want to leave, and thanks to the culinary ministrations of chef Marlin Clayton, you don't have to (his fillet with locally foraged wild mushrooms beats most anything prepared by the valley's more famous chefs). The only caveat is that Angala is at least 15 minutes from the village centre. **ROOM TIP** It's worth booking a luxury suite – large

and luxurious, with a lounge and fireplace, an enormous bathroom that includes an outdoor shower and by far the best views.

PRICE From R2 250 for two sharing; luxury suites are from R4550 for two sharing. Rates include breakfast and a complimentary minibar.

CONTACT angala.co.za





AVONDROOD GUESTHOUSE

TripAdvisor No. 2 of 58 B&B/Inn

The website doesn't do this four-star boutique B&B full justice, but the rave TripAdvisor reviews are spot on: a great central location just off the main drag running through town, yet very peaceful; lovely big rooms with excellent facilities, and personal, professional service. The conversion of this 1870s house into a B&B was generous. Six of the eight rooms share the garden, and there's a fabulous honesty bar-lounge located in the old barn: centred on a large open fireplace, this is a marvellous place to settle in for pre- or post-dinner drinks. The pool, tucked away at the end of the garden, is private, which suits those of us over a certain age. **ROOM TIP** All excellent, varying only in size. Personally, I'd book the small great-value

standard, except in winter when the fireplaces in two of the deluxe rooms and family deluxe suite come in very handy. The upstairs two-bedroom family unit is another great option.

COST From R1 950 for two sharing B&B, or the family suite from R3500 B&B (sleeps four).

CONTACT avondrood.com





THE CASE FOR **FRANSCHHOEK**

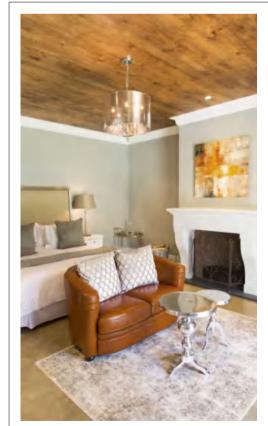
- SPOILT FOR CHOICE Regular readers will recall how blown away I was by the quality of lodging stock here, which is why we reviewed the top selfcatering options in October (see them online now at getaway.co.za) and are now focusing on top B&B/hotels.
- AFFORDABLE SPLURGE Given the high number of hotels rated as world class by alobetrotters who frequent the valley, and which charge accordingly, we peaged our choice of remarkable places at no higher than around R4 000 for two sharing B&B.
- WHERE TO LOOK The deeper southwest you drive into the valley -Verdun, Green Valley, Minor, Middagkrans, Robertsvlei - the closer you are to the mountain wilderness.
- BOOK NOW We are running this in January because the common refrain in a valley this popular is 'Book now to avoid disappointment'. Take a look at your calendar and secure the best room in the house/hotel now.
- DIARISE THESE DATES Personally, I much prefer Franschhoek when there is nothing going on, so I'd book an arbitrary weekend and surprise your partner, but if you like to mingle with the hoi polloi the following are happening events in 2016: Franschhoek Literary Festival

13 –15 May (flf.co.za); Bastille Day 16 - 17 July (franschhoekbastille.co.za);

Franschhoek Uncorked 26 - 27 September

(franschhoekuncorked. co.za): Franschhoek **Champagne Festival**

3 - 4 December (franschhoekmcc.co.za).



Best boutique B&B

LA PETITE DAUPHINE

TripAdvisor No. 5 of 40 Speciality Lodging

Just nine impeccably groomed rooms spread across park-like grounds, each individually dressed in a hybrid American/French-country style by owner/decorator Gert Gertzen, who has not stinted on quality. He did a similar sterling job with Café BonBon, the delightful on-site restaurant where breakfast and lunch are served every day and dinner on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights. La Petite Dauphine is a working farm, the gardens surrounded by plum orchards, olive groves and vineyards, but the atmosphere is more grand estate than agricultural. Whether you prefer this to Angala Boutique Hotel (page 37) is a matter of taste and location. (Note: La Petite Dauphine shares nothing but its name

rpage 37) is a matter of taste and location. (Note La Petite Dauphine shares nothing but its name with Auberge La Dauphine, a good B&B with a collection of cottages located fairly nearby).

ROOM TIP Suite 9 is the smallest but the most private, and great value; personally, I loved the grand proportions and elegance of Suite 1.

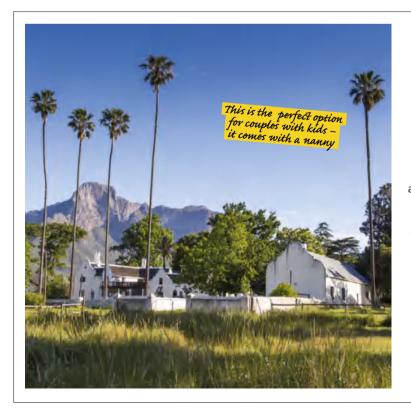
But for a blow-out splurge, book an Exclusive Villa Suite, with a private plunge pool.

COST From R3 800 per night for two sharing

for one-night stays). **CONTACT** *lapetite.co.za*

B&B for two nights (rates inflate hugely





Best-value farmstay for families

LEKKERWIJN

TripAdvisor No. 19 of 58 B&B/Inn

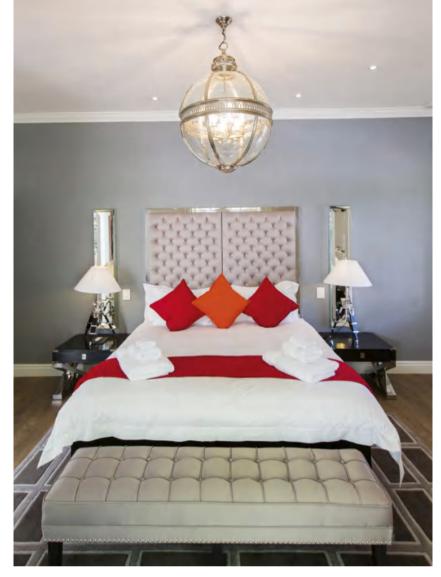
With so many groomed and glossy options, it's rather wonderful to find an old Cape Dutch farmhouse still imbued with original character. It's very much billed as a historic house, with plenty of antique furniture and fittings, so will suit those with a nostalgic bent and an appreciation for the congenial and the homely. This is also a stand-out destination for parents with small children – aside from the delightful children's playroom, small pool and a few farm animals, there is a trained nanny available (R50/hour) so parents can go wine tasting or escape

for dinner (town is about 15 minutes away; the manager will arrange a taxi or chauffeur). There are self-catering options on the grounds, but these are not yet up to the standards of the self-catering options rated in the October issue.

ROOM TIP I'd book Old Nursery upstairs, with its picture-perfect view from the bed.

COST From R875 for two sharing B&B. There's also a full-house option with a negotiable rate (sleeps 14).

CONTACT lekkerwijn.com



Best value luxury 8&8

LA PROVIDENCE

TripAdvisor No. 2 of 40 Speciality Lodging

This is the newly renovated holiday home of a European owner, who has splurged on creating totally separate guest accommodation in a four-roomed annex (called La Petite), of which two open onto a private pool and three are upstairs in outbuildings behind the historic main house. While shape and size differ, all seven rooms are furnished identically, with expensive, modern pieces utilising a prodigious use of mirrors, and an urban palette of grey, white, black and red – an interesting juxtaposition with the traditional Cape Dutch exteriors. Discreet management and a great location

juxtaposition with the traditional Cape Dutch exteriors. Discreet management and a great location (walking distance to the centre), but you know you've bagged a real bargain when you turn the corner and survey the private entertainment area: an enormous

12-metre pool, flanked by a swanky bar-lounge, a firepit with circular seating and the most awe-inspiring mountain views – a great place to chill, or throw an impromptu party.

ROOM TIP Unless you're travelling with friends, I'd definitely bag Valley View Room, or Gentleman Room – both exceptional value.

COST From R2 400 for two sharing B&B. **CONTACT** *laprovidence.co.za*



Best value large four-star hotel

LE FRANSCHHOEK HOTEL & SPA

Tucked deep into the crook of the Hottentots Holland Mountains, the setting is fantastic, matched only by (far pricier) Mont Rochelle and La Petite Ferme when it comes to exceptional views. Once known as Swiss Farm Excelsior, the classic thatched Alpine-style country retreat was given an elegant makeover some years back, and with 63 rooms at a low-price point, attracts the corporate market; as such public spaces can be overrun with banners and the vibe impersonal, but given the stunning location, decor and price, I would be delighted to wash up here for a romantic weekend. **ROOM TIP** Location is more important than category, and the main building is it. With views through dormer windows in the thatched ceiling, I'd be happiest in any of the second-floor rooms here, all standard, bar number 26, a deluxe with balcony,

TripAdvisor No. 8 of 8 Hotel and probably the best room in the hotel. **COST** It works on the Best Available Rate system, so varies depending on occupancy. From R1 610 for two sharing B&B, or from R1 895 for four in a family room B&B. CONTACT lefranschhoek.co.za





Most intimate 888

RICKETY BRIDGE COUNTRY HOUSE

TripAdvisor No.17 of 58 B&B/Inn

Located at the end of a road off the busy R45 into Franschhoek, the 19th-century Rickety Bridge Manor House is a surprisingly peaceful oasis, with three en-suite rooms of which the two upstairs rooms – spaciously laid out under the thatch – are the top pick. Adjacent is Paulina's, the estate restaurant (lunch and evening functions only) and wine tasting, as well as a small pool, but other than this there isn't much of a hub. If you're on a budget, it's worth looking at neighbouring sister property Basse Provence, with a choice of nine more units in three separate buildings: a smaller 19th-century Manor House (three en-suite rooms), a thatched guest house (four suites), and a small two-bedroom cottage. Staff at both Rickety Bridge and Basse Provence offer service that is authentic farm-style warm.

ROOM TIP Book the two upstairs at Rickety Bridge. **COST** From R2000 for two sharing B&B at Rickety Bridge; from R910 for two sharing B&B at Basse Provence. **CONTACT** ricketybridgewinery.com



WORTH A LOOK VILLAGE CENTRE

Auberge Daniella would have made the cut had I space for one more full review! There are just three private units (I prefer Lavender Cottage), each with lounge, dining room, kitchen and Egyptian cotton linen. From R1 600 for two sharing B&B. aubergedaniella.co.za

Plumwood Inn is popular but packed in a bit too densely for my liking. That said, if you bag upstairs Room 4 you'll have the best room: a spectacular view and a fireplace. R1 090 for two sharing B&B. *plumwoodinn.com* **Le Fontaine** is a good option for bargain hunters, with 14 ensuite rooms in two heritage properties. I prefer the garden suites, in particular Lemon and Orange, and the Stables. From R1 300 for two sharing B&B. *lafontainefranschhoek.co.za*

The Cottage on 55 Huguenot is included here again because the deluxe room is the best-value, stylish B&B option within the village, at R1 500 for two sharing. cottageon 55.com

Maison Chablis is a functional Georgian-style B&B that offers compact, good-value rooms. From R1 320 for two sharing B&B. maisonchablis.co.za

OUTSKIRTS

Lavender Farm Guest House

is off Verdun Road. The decor is a little corporate but the property is quaint and the lavender fields it overlooks quite literally a balm. From R1 395 for two sharing B&B. lavenderfarmfranschhoek.co.za Auberge Clermont enjoys

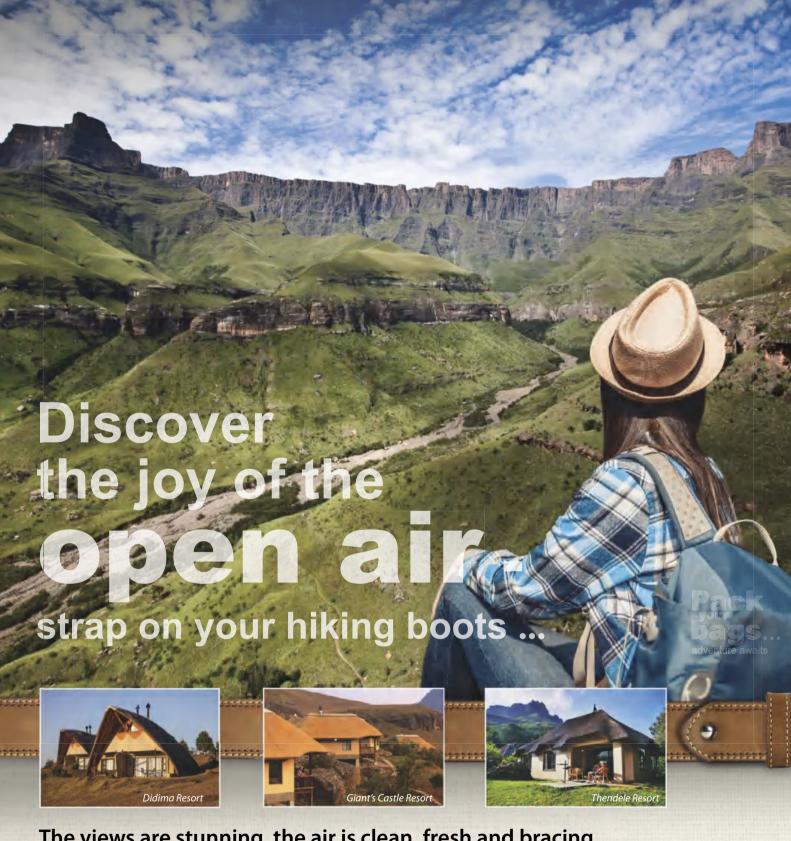
a fabulous location under

400-year-old oaks.

There are six suites (the Loft Rooms have the best views) and a self-catering villa. From R1 950 for two sharing B&B. clermont.co.za

La Petite Ferme has the best views in the valley and during low season (May to October) the freestanding Champagne and Vista suites (each with plunge pool and fireplace) are a good deal at R3 190 for two sharing B&B. *lapetiteferme.co.za*

*Prices and rankings correct at time of going to print



The views are stunning, the air is clean, fresh and bracing,

the accommodation comfortable and snug. Take a refreshing break in the Maloti-Drakensberg Park just four hours from Johannesburg or Durban along the N3.

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HOT SPOTS

YOUR NEXT HOLIDAY HIT LIST



ALL TOGETHER, NOW

GROUP HOLIDAYS ARE FUN AND COST-EFFECTIVE. WE FOUND FOUR SPOTS THAT ARE PERFECT FOR A WHOLE LOT OF LAUGHTER AND GOOD TIMES



1 NGOYE LODGE

Mtunzini, KwaZulu-Natal

Unexpectedly spacious in this small coastal town, Ngoye Lodge is ideal for a fun group get-together in an outdoorsy environment. It's set on a wide green lawn with a lengthy swimming pool out front for hot summer days. The open-plan design and large windows create an easy flow and its style is contemporary, with SA arts and crafts and plant-filled vases. When you're finished dining at the outside table or playing on the foosball machine, you can head to the beach, just a few minutes' drive away. If you're lucky you might

even spot one of Mtunzini's famous palm-nut vultures. Ngoye sleeps 10 in five bedrooms, and should you need more space your group can spill over into the more private Nguni Cottage, a tastefully furnished two-bedroom house where Jacob Zuma once rested his weary head while attending a nearby wedding ceremony. RATES From R3 000 (sleeps 10).

CONTACT 079-501-5342, www.lovemorelodges.co.za

- TEAGAN CUNNIFFE







2 THE SULLIES

Morgan Bay, Eastern Cape

Just an hour's drive from East London, the stylish double-storey The Sullies beach house overlooks a lush lagoon alive with birds in Morgan Bay. White hammocks adorn the deck and a 10-minute walk takes you straight to the beach – a beautiful bay fringed by dramatic Wild Coast cliffs. The open-plan kitchen includes a Nespresso machine, gas stove, icemaker, two fridges and daily housekeeping so catering for 10 is a breeze. There are three spacious and chic en-suite double bedrooms and two kids' rooms with enough bunk beds to sleep six. Basic supplies are available from a store nearby, but if you're not one for cooking on holiday, check out the Morgan Bay Hotel for a variety of meals and sip daiguiris on the deck while gazing at the ocean.

RATES R3 800 (sleeps 10).

CONTACT 082-650-8400, *morganbay.co.za* - MELANIE VAN ZYL

OVERSEERS MOUNTAIN COTTAGE

Cape Town, Western Cape

High up on the southern reaches of Table Mountain lies the beautifully positioned Overseers Mountain Cottage. From a low koppie between the De Villiers and Alexandra dams, the stone hut and adjacent annex have wonderful, sweeping views of the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, False Bay and Cape Peninsula mountains. It's a four-and-a-half-kilometre hike up a jeep track to reach the cottage, but you can leave your bags and supplies at SANParks' Orange Kloof Camp for transfer up the mountain. The main cottage sleeps 10 in four rooms and the annex sleeps six in two rooms. There's hot water, solar electricity, a gas cooker, bedding and towels.

RATES From R2600 for six. R450 per extra adult, R225 per extra child. Maximum 16 people.

CONTACT 021-712-7471, sanparks.org.za - CHRIS DAVIES

4 HOUSE OF FELS

Vermaaklikheid, Western Cape

Set on the banks of the Duiwenhoks River, this whimsical 10-sleeper house is perfect for slowly slipping into somnolent holiday mode. Designed by architect Jackson Andrew, it comprises three bedrooms clustered around an atrium. One of the bedrooms sleeps six in single, antique-style white beds. The main bedroom has an en-suite bathroom, while the others share ablutions. It's the details that captivate a vintage rake serves as a coat hook, a white rowing boat hangs from the ceiling in the large bedroom and the ponds in front of the house are said to have been used to capture eels that washed in when the river rose. You may be visited by a few creepy crawlies, but they tend to keep to themselves.

RATES R5 500 (sleeps 10). CONTACT 021-791-0142,

perfecthideaways.co.za - HELEN WALNE

BON Hotel Swakopmund is so new the paint has just dried. Opened in December, the four-star hotel is just minutes from the city centre. There are 34 luxury rooms, a health



and wellness centre, a lower level of shops and eateries and various meeting places for those doing business. RATES From R795 pp sharing B&B.

CONTACT +264-(0)64-426-800, bonhotels.com



PLUSH IN THE BUSH

A new addition to upmarket Waterberg accommodation is Mackouwkuil Game Lodge & Conference Venue. While it's been hosting private groups for almost two years, it opened to the public late last year. The lodge is set in a game reserve overlooking a dam that is home to a pod of hippos. Accommodation includes 13 guest rooms, 12 luxury rooms, two three-person guesthouses and four luxury tents. Activities include game drives, mountainbiking and fishing.

RATES From R1 350 pp sharing, including all meals and a game drive. CONTACT 014-161-0530, mackouwkuil.co.za

OYSTER BOX NETS PEARLS

Umhlanga's Oyster Box recently scooped a slew of local and international awards. Among them are the number two spot in the Readers' Choice Awards for Condé Nast Traveler's 'Top 25 Hotels in Africa' and best luxury family hotel in South Africa at the 2015 World **Luxury Hotel Awards.** www.oysterbox.co.za





The Eastern Cape is the place to be this summer for sun, surf É safari.

There's an adventure for every kind of adventurer in the Eastern Cape. Stand in awe of the magnificent Mkhambathi Waterfalls or marvel at the perfectly sculptured Hole in the Wall. Hike over the spectacular Amathole Mountains or along the Sunshine or Wild Coasts. Take the plunge by jumping from the world's highest bungee at Bloukrans Bridge in Tsitsikamma, ride that wave at Supertubes in Jeffreys Bay, glide through tree top canopies or be captivated by a herd of Elephants at Addo National Elephant Park.

Visit www.visiteasterncape.co.za to view exciting adventure activities.

ARE YOU up for it?

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TRAVEL BITES

FOOD & DRINKS

FARE WORTH TRAVELLING FOR



EAT AT THE TEST KITCHEN

Gauteng's culinary cognoscenti will no doubt be clinking glasses in celebration when chef Luke Dale-Roberts extends his golden touch to Joburg and opens The Test Kitchen pop-up at The Saxon Hotel later this month. This award-winning Cape Town restaurant made a 20-place leap from number 48 to number 28 on the World's 50 Best Restaurants list in 2015 and – with the promise of other big ideas to be disclosed as the year progresses – the Luke Dale-Roberts empire looks set for expansion in 2016. By the time this is published, Luke's new space Naturalis should also be fully operational. It's The Test Kitchen that never was, the space Luke intended when he first started out: his own private laboratory. Since it's very much a place for Luke to play, there's no number to ring up and reserve a table but there will be a service hatch. This is where you're likely to find him, creating healthconscious, veggie-driven plates-to-go. The Test Kitchen, Saxon Hotel

The Test Kitchen, Saxon Hotel Villas & Spa. 011-292-6000, saxon.co.za
The Test Kitchen, Cape Town. 021-447-2337, thetestkitchen.co.za

BOOKING TIP Like any other global-superstar restaurant, you don't decide when you eat there, they do. Phone now for the next available booking. If you're committing to The Test Kitchen, order the full gourmand tasting menu with wine pairings, from R1 385 pp.

2

DON'T MISS THESE EAT-A-COW GATHERINGS

On my last trip to Joburg I bought two rump steaks from Caroline McCann and slapped them on the braai with nothing more than sea salt and black pepper, as per her advice. They were so deeply meaty - almost Marmite-y - that I daydreamed, briefly, about relocating to be closer to her Braeside Butchery in Parkhurst. Caroline is an outspoken advocate for grass-fed, free-range meat. She also champions local cattle breeds, having worked with Slow Food to register the Afrikaner cow as an Ark of Taste product. (The Ark highlights indigenous foods facing extinction worldwide.) Caroline has summed up her philosophy as Slow Meat and will be spreading the word beyond Joburg in 2016 with three Eat A Cow gatherings: 10 acclaimed chefs cook from one cow and guests choose which five of the 10 dishes they get to eat. These are set for March in Cape Town, May in Joburg and July in Durban. Check slowfood.co.za for details. Braeside Butchery. 011-788-3613,

ordering TIP Pretoria customers can collect orders from the newly opened Braeside deboning plant in Boksburg. 011-823-1287, or email sales@ braesidebutchery.co.za

braesidebutchery.co.za



'They were so meaty – almost Marmite-y – that I daydreamed, briefly, about relocating...'

3

PLAN YOUR EPIC CULINARY TOUR OF JAPAN NOW!

Chef, author and TV personality Anthony Bourdain – editor-at-large of Roads & Kingdoms, an award-winning travel journalism site – is rethinking the traditional guidebook with Rice, Noodle, Fish by Matt Goulding, Goulding, a Roads & Kingdoms co-founder and veteran food writer, journeyed 8000 kilometres across Japan to compile this full-colour exploration of food culture featuring seven of the best cities for eating: Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Kanazawa, Fukuoka and Hokkaido. While this serves as insight and inspiration, the nitty-gritty (restaurants, hotels, pricing and etiquette) is accessed through a series of free digital guides found on the site and intended for use in tandem with the book. They're mobile-device friendly and designed to be used for planning, travel and post-trip sharing. This is the comprehensive how-to Western foodies have been waiting for – backed by Bourdain, who crossed landmined Khmer Rouge territory (in his travel journal A Cook's Tour) searching for the perfect meal. Click through to Roads & Kingdoms and make 2016 the year of your culinary epic to Japan.

Rice, Noodle, Fish: Deep Travels Through Japan's Food Culture by Matt Goulding (Harper Wave) is available on Amazon, from R325. roadsandkingdoms.com >

THE ONE WINE **YOU MUST DRINK**

In 2015 I was lucky enough to have a sneak preview of Matt Day's first vintage of Vin de Constance (VDC). It was an impromptu tasting in his lab and I promised not to tell, but now I can because it's launching in May. As Matt tells it, it was make or break. Klein Constantia's winemaker took up a position elsewhere and Matt (then assistant winemaker) was briefed as follows: Here's the 2012 vintage – do it well, and you have the job. Er, no pressure. It's only a South African icon. And Matt was only about to get married. He warned his bride-to-be that they may need to postpone, but fortunately harvesting finished two days before his wedding. Needless to say, he's now the winemaker at Klein Constantia, which says a lot about the VDC 2012. 'I'm not trying to fix something that isn't broke,' says Matt, 'but going for something more perfumed and expressive.' If VDC's typical flavour profile is dried apricot and orange marmalade, he's aiming for more orange blossom and white-stone fruit. In celebration, the marrying priest agreed to pour VDC 2007 – and each guest took communion. Vin de Constance 2012, from R750. Klein Constantia, 021-794-5188,

kleinconstantia.com

TASTING TIP VDC is included in the wine tastings. R30 pp to taste seven wines.





THE FOODIES' SAFARI YOU SHOULD BOOK IN 2016

'The breakfast buffet was as exciting as my sighting of bat-eared foxes'

It was quite by chance that I landed up at Bartholomeus Klip last year and I've been longing to return ever since. In my limited experience, bush getaways are not about the food – it's about being immersed in nature and the perspective that brings. But at this Victorian homestead the breakfast buffet was as exciting as my sighting of bat-eared foxes. There was millionaire's shortbread made with a muesli base, soft caramel, a thin layer of roasted white chocolate and cocoa nibs ... and sweetcorn fritters topped with cream cheese, roasted tomato and bacon ... and egg rolls with ham, caramelised onions and mixed baby leaves ... and waffles made with brown sugar and browned butter and served with caramelised apples ... and then someone took

my order for poached eggs, the flattest, crispiest bacon and housemade venison sausage. And that was the first meal of the day. Chef Louise Gillet's cooking turns dining into a full-time pursuit and I'd be hard-pressed to choose between a game drive and high tea. R3585 pp for full board (high tea, snacks, sundowners, four-course dinner, early-morning coffee and pastries, and mid-morning brunch), two nature drives daily and all activities (canoeing, cycling, fishing).

Bartholomeus Klip, Riebeek Valley, Western Cape. 022-448-1087, bartholomeusklip.com

BOOKING TIP Visit during low season (May to September) and get 25 per cent off when reserving for more than two nights.

BUILD YOUR SELF-CATERING SURVIVAL KIT

FIRST-AID KIT? CHECK. ROAD-SAFETY KIT? CHECK. WHAT ABOUT YOUR KITCHEN KIT? HERE ARE 10 PANTRY STAPLES YOU SHOULD ALWAYS TAKE ON HOLIDAY

1. EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

Choose a good-quality peppery, grassy extra-virgin that can multitask. Drizzle over mozzarella and tomato or sliced, braaied rib-eye with rocket, whisk into salad dressing or whip into aioli for aperitif-hour crudités.

2. GARLIC

Summer is garlic season so buy travel-hardy fresh whole heads. Roast and squeeze out the soft, sweet, mellow cloves, pound them with butter to make homemade garlic bread, pulp to a purée for salad dressing or use raw for seasoning bruschetta.

3. SEA-SALT FLAKES

With beach house-assembled food, the texture of sea-salt flakes is everything. Add to garlic cloves when crushing, scatter over seared steak and to season salads.

4. LEMONS

Lemons are indispensable – whether you're cleaning a braai grid, adding slices to your G&T, squeezing chargrilled halves over braaied yellowtail and calamari or spritzing into a basic Marie Rose sauce for kreef leg meat.

5. WINE VINEGAR (RED OR WHITE)

Even if its primary use is for salad dressing – either one that's fully emulsified or just a rudimentary seasoning for roasted and skinned red peppers – pack it in.

6. PARMESAN

Parmesan holds up even if refrigeration is a challenge. Pick at it while sipping a glass of chilled Pinot Grigio, shave over salads, grate over pasta – or, if you have some crazy-fresh basil, make your own pesto. (You'll need pine nuts for this and the salad, see *getaway.co.za*).



7. ONIONS

Where would a boerie roll be without a spoonful of sweet, caramelised onions? And even if you can't lay your hands on fresh tomatoes, if you have some hardy alliums and half decent cheddar you'll always be able to make a braai broodije.

8. DRIED CHILLIES

Dried chillies last longer than fresh and they are the quintessential seasoning for the ultimate holiday recipe: Cuban corn cobs! (see *getaway.co.za*). Also sprinkle on chilled, freshly cut pineapple or watermelon with sea-salt flakes for a tropical salve against the heat.

9. DRIED PASTA

When the sun has set, glasses are empty and it's too late to light a fire, dried pasta is your friend. It's ready in seven minutes and – hey pesto (sorry) – so is dinner. Buy bow ties or shells and they can do double service as a pasta salad.

10. SUNFLOWER/CANOLA/ GRAPESEED OIL

When you're on breakfast duty

For top tips and beachholiday recipes using these core ingredients, see *getaway.co.za*

or the pan in your holiday rental looks dodgy, use an oil with a high smoke point to season it first – those fried eggs will slide out every time. Rub this neutral oil onto meat that's headed for a hot grill or make homemade mayonnaise and turn it into tartare sauce.



ADVERTORIAL

EXPLORING MOUNTAIN TRAILS AND CAMPING UNDER THE STARS, LATE NIGHTS AROUND THE CAMPFIRE AND VIEWS ACROSS THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH AFRICAN BUSHVELD... THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT MAKE SUMMERTIME ADVENTURES SO MEMORABLE. THINK OF THE SUMMER HUMDRUM AS THE SUN HEATS THE EARTH, THE KIDS SPLASHING IN THE ROCKPOOL, THE SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT BASS IN THE FARM DAM. IT'S ALSO THE GIGGLES YOU HEAR AT THE CRACK OF DAWN AS THE KIDS WAKE, OR THE SOUNDS OF FUN AS THEY RUN THROUGH THE WAVES, OR THE CONTENT SMILES AS THEY CURL UP ON YOUR LAP AFTER A FUN DAY IN THE SUN.

Whether you're renting an apartment along the Sunshine Coast or villa on the West Coast, boating on the Knysna Lagoon or taking in the views from your resort hotel room, South Africa's summer sunshine will never disappoint. Add to these memorable, special moments with a classic summer treat, the First Choice way.

We created a classic summer treat just for you, using our Alreadyset Jelly in a box and our creamy Vanilla Custard. First Choice Already-set Jelly is available in a range of delicious flavours: Pineapple might make you think you're in Hawaii, Strawberry is deliciously sweet, Orange is all kinds of juicy, Lemon definitely won't leave a sour taste in your mouth, Apple is simply awesome, Grape is utterly tantalising, and Blueberry is beyond good.

This classic summer treat is perfect to be enjoyed poolside, on the beach while building sandcastles or for that late night snack session as you enjoy the summer evening breeze. Not only will the kids ask for more, but you'll reminisce about your own childhood summer holidays, when your mom lathered you in sunblock and watched you frolick in the waves from under her beach umbrella.

Available at all leading retailers in 500g cartons, you can happily stock your holiday home pantry as both the Jelly and Custard are long life products. For an added fun treat with the kids, why not decant and melt down the jelly and remould it into fun shapes before refrigerating!



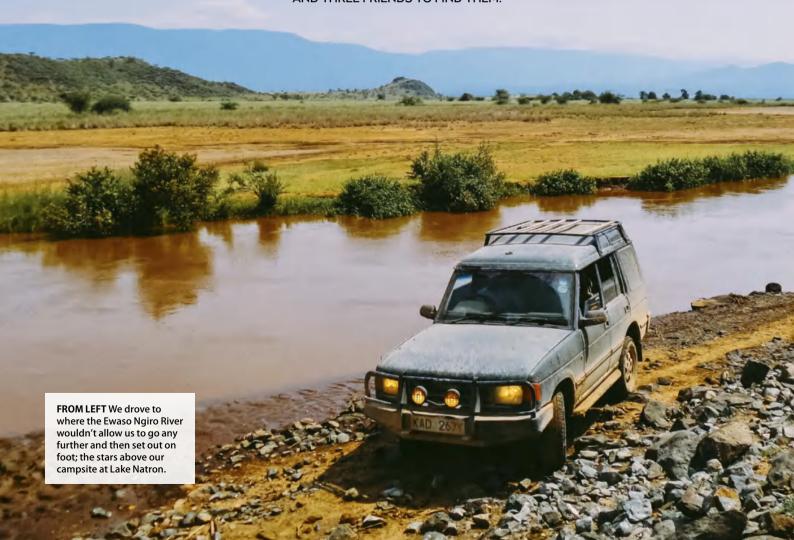
ON TRACK

TRIPPING

SOUTHERN AFRICAN ROUTES WORTH TAKING



IN KENYA, THERE ARE ROADS SO REMOTE NOT EVEN GOOGLE WILL MAP THEM. PHOTOGRAPHER MUTUA MATHEKA PACKED HIS LANDY, LUANDA, AND THREE FRIENDS TO FIND THEM.





very so often in one's life, one does some epic stuff (at least in one's opinion) and the best thing is to tell everyone else about it. So here is my story about our road trip to the incredible salt-and-soda Lake Natron, a journey full of surprises.

Lake Natron is actually in Tanzania, but very near the Kenyan border, so it's easy to access from the Kenyan side (I use the term 'easy' loosely here).

The first stretch was a taste of what was to come. Lake Magadi is about 120 kilometres from the centre of Nairobi and it's a beautiful drive, but the road is no joke. For the last 60 kilometres, potholes jostle one another in a mad competition to eat up the remaining tarmac - know that your car shall take a beating.

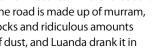
Then it was on to Shompole, a small Masai town further south. The road is made up of murram, rocks and ridiculous amounts of dust, and Luanda drank it in

(one of the perks of driving a '94 car). Our strategy was to drive really slowly – which meant we missed lunch.

But we had a plan: look for a goat and have it roasted for us. Luckily we were in Masai land, which means goats are abundant. And these are goats that roam, eating wild stuff, so they are yummy, unlike the goats in Nairobi that spend their days in garbage pits stuffing themselves with plastic bags and leftover fries. This was the real deal.

A guy at the shopping centre told us a goat would cost around 2000 shillings (R230). He even found a man prepared to sell one, and so we went to look at his herd. The nice grey one we picked would cost us 5000 shillings (R575), he said over double the initial price (shocking). Fierce haggling ensued and finally we got it for 4000 shillings (R460), and he agreed to slaughter and roast it for us that evening.

The deal done, we headed for Lake Natron, where we aimed to >



'IN THE MORNING WE GOT THE GRILL GOING AND ROASTED SOME CHOMA SAUSAGES FOR BREAKFAST'



set up camp. My friend Peter Ndung'u had heard that lions roam the area (they don't), so he hired his own Masai security for the night for 500 shillings (R57), a chap called Joseph, who was also going to be our local quide. What we didn't know is that there is no actual road beyond Shompole, just a grazing path that runs along the Ewaso Ngiro River, and that Joseph would not be a deterrent to the extortioners we'd meet along the way. But we did as we were told and drove along the river.

The sun was going down fast and it became clear we weren't going to make Lake Natron by sunset. So we found a nice flat area near the river and set up camp. The sunset was glorious, but soon it was dark and we made our way into the town

centre to the shed for our dinner of roast goat.

A bowl of water so brown it looked like cocoa was brought out to wash our hands in, and afterwards our looks said it all: did we seriously wash our hands in that water?! However, nothing can explain how good the goat was. The Masai know how to roast their meat perfectly: not too done or too rare. It's a perfect balance that leaves it very juicy. Soon, all that was left was a rack of ribs, which we packed for breakfast.

Back at camp (when we found it), the sky was so clear that we city boys became too preoccupied with it to do anything else but take photographs. The plan was to sleep under the starry skies sans tents (for the few advent-

urous ones, at least) but the mosquitoes were vicious. Shooting photographs of the stars had to be done on the move, but the buggers feasted on me like I was a juicy piece of steak.

In the morning we got the grill (read: hole in the ground) going and roasted some choma sausages for breakfast (plus the rack of ribs from the previous night). Then we readied ourselves to go to Lake Natron.

Some Masai men had gathered around the camp. They said this was community land and we needed to pay something. First of all, this was ridiculous. Second, what use was our guide Joseph if he couldn't tell us about 'hidden charges' like these? They were asking 200 shillings (R23) per



person for a campsite that hadn't existed until we'd decided it was a campsite the previous night. After agreeing with them that we would pay if they brought us receipts, Joseph suggested a route that took us into the hills. There we found a man who said we had to pay to use that road because it had been made by the church: 500 shillings (R57) per car. At this point we were pretty mad with Joseph.

Soon we were at the very end of the Ewaso Ngiro River, where it forms a network of tributaries that flow into Lake Natron. The cars couldn't go any further because the river blocked our access. To find another route and get further into the lake basin would take too much time, so we parked and walked the rest of the way (about two

kilometres) and climbed a hill.

From the top it was like seeing a network of veins broken by spits of land forming intricate patterns that led into a huge expanse of water. It was so huge we couldn't see the horizon. On the other side of the basin, blue hills broke the interconnected veins of water and land, and were reflected perfectly on the seemingly still lake. The view was totally worth the effort. I like to sit and take in views like these.

Some time later we started our journey back, secretly hoping the campsite men would have forgotten about us. Alas, we found them by the road at the town. Amazingly, they had receipts, so we paid. And we paid Joseph, and finally left Shompole behind us. **@**



ABOVE Steve Kitoto seemed to collect the entire region's dust on his head. THIS PAGE A view of the Ewaso Ngiro tributaries flowing into Lake Natron. OPPOSITE Joseph (right) and his friend with the goat we bought for dinner.



NAIROBI TO LAKE NATRON DIRECTORY

NEED TO KNOW

You will need Kenyan shillings (KSh). R1 is about 8KSh. Always carry lots of water, spare money and insect repellent. Get a guide in Magadi (this means having space for one more in your car) to help negotiate with the Masai, who use your lack of knowledge to introduce fees that don't exist. A good, honest guide will save you a lot of money and costs around R70 per day. You can find a guide at the Flamingo Simba club/ restaurant (it's on

Have at least 60 litres of fuel. Lake Natron is 150 kilometres from Nairobi and in the rainy season some routes are flooded (especially around Lake Magadi), and there are detours. We used about 50 litres of diesel, which cost approximately R550.

Drive slowly on dirt roads. It will reduce the amount of dust.

ACTIVITIES

Google maps).

Stop at the Lake Magadi hot **springs.** Apart from the

thousands of flamingos that flock to the lake at the right time of the year, the springs are a therapeutic way to relax and heal. They are only accessible in the dry season. Entrance is R28 pp and R28 per car.

Visit Olorgesailie, about 64 kilometres south of Nairobi en route to Magadi. It's a prehistoric site where hominin tools (including a large number of Ancheulian hand axes) and fossils that date back as much as 900 000 years were discovered. Entrance is R14 for adult Kenyan residents and R70 for non-residents (under 16s pay half). museums.or.ke

→ NEED A 4×4?

A great 4x4 Safari company is **Erikson Rover Safaris.** They offer self drive, have vehicles with camping gear and rooftop tents and accessories to rent. You don't have to self drive, of course, you can also hire a driver. Prices for vehicles start at R1 650 per day. +254 724 647982, roversafari.com

PLACES TO STAY

There are no formal campsites. Anywhere that is flat is good but the best spots are along the river. You will need to pay the Masai to camp. We paid R28 pp.

try not to eat all your food on the first day. nakumatt.net The Shompole market sells livestock and vegetables but, honestly, it's better to get your food in Nairobi and only shop there if you're in a bind.

NAIROBI

FOOD

Nakumatt Mega in Nairobi has everything you need. We bought all our supplies, such as water, choma sausages, ham, C58 juice, matches, charcoal and lighter fluid, before we set off. OLORGESAILI Don't forget a cooler box and LAKE MAGADI **EWASO** NGIRO >

> CONSERVANCY **FLOODING** SHOMPOLE

MAGADI

SEASONAL

KENYA

LAKE

SHOMPOLE

NATRON TANZANIA



DO IT YOURSELF

HOW TO DRIVE FROM SA TO NAIROBI

IN 2013, ROSS STACEY AND HIS GIRLFRIEND CARRYN SMIT UNDERTOOK AN EIGHT-WEEK JOURNEY FROM CAPE TOWN TO NAIROBI AND BACK. HERE'S HOW THEY DID IT

The insanity of new love made us do it. We had just started dating and decided to test the limits of our relationship by living out of a tent and eating tinned food for eight weeks. The best thing about travelling through Africa is that it's the closest thing you'll get to living your childhood dream of being a real explorer.

As your connection to the

global village diminishes with the cellular signal, you realise that you become more connected to the world without internet or phones. Africa is charming, but it can also be unforgiving. Each day brought us closer to understanding the beauty of that. It changed us forever. If your relationship can survive this – it can survive anything (yes, we're still together).



→ NEED TO KNOW

There are two things Africa does not like: technology and tyres. We drove a Nissan Hardbody with a large closed canopy. We broke down twice. Take as many spares as you can carry and at least two large jerry cans in case you need to store fuel. Take a GPS but do not trust it. Not even satellites in space can reliably navigate you through the Western Highlands of Kenya.

→ THE ROUTE

We travelled through six countries (Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya) and covered roughly 13 500 kilometres. It took us six weeks to get from Cape Town to Nairobi and 13 days to get back.

→ ROAD CONDITIONS

Average to awful. Drive slowly. Donkeys and cows (and some people) are suicidal. Never drive at night because the basketballsize potholes become drinking holes for the livestock. The rainy season in January can turn many parts (such as Southern Tanzania) into a dead-zone of sludge. September and October are best.

BORDERS

Borders are unhappiness factories. There are ancient ruins in better shape than some of them. Make sure you have the following: passport; yellow-fever certificate; international driver's licence; car ownership and registration papers; insurance documents; temporary import permit. Beware of third-party insurance scammers (arrange insurance in advance to avoid being overcharged).

→ POLICE

The police are particularly bad in Tanzania and Zambia. They will do whatever it takes to get paid. Make sure you have all the requirements for your car (see above).

MEDICAL

Stock up on all prescription medications before your trip. You will be travelling through malaria areas, so visit your doctor beforehand to discuss prophylaxes. Hand sanitiser became invaluable. Take flea powder, because neither the pharmacies nor vets have it.

ACCOMMODATION

We camped in a six-man tent for the entire journey (in Botswana, a puff adder gave birth underneath it). Most campsites are fine and some are excellent. These were our favourites: Ais Ais Resort, Namibia is in the heart of the Fish River Canyon and has a 65 degree hot tub. From R169 pp. aiaisresort.com Planet Baobab, Botswana is mystical with a rustic charm. Be sure to check out the art. From R130 pp. planetbaobab.co Kande Beach, Malawi is a white sand oasis on Lake Malawi, complete with hammocks. From R100 pp. kandebeach.com Changa Changa Bridge Camp, Zambia has an amazing swimming pool overlooking the Luangwa River. From R115 pp. bridgecampzambia.com Peponi Resort, Tanzania is a family-friendly site with a bright coral reef on its doorstep. From R92 pp. peponiresort.com Karen Camp, Kenya is an overlander hub in Nairobi. Great ablutions and nearby amenities. From R100 pp. karencamp.com

→ FOOD

Outside of the cities, convenient food is a problem. There isn't any. You can't stop for lunch because your options are a goat hanging from a pole or some kind of bird. But the bird is still alive. Take lots of snacks, and buy fruit wherever possible.

COST

Prices (especially fuel) can fluctuate wildly, but a rough estimate is R20 000 for fuel and R8 000 pp for accommodation and food.

dimensionstents.com

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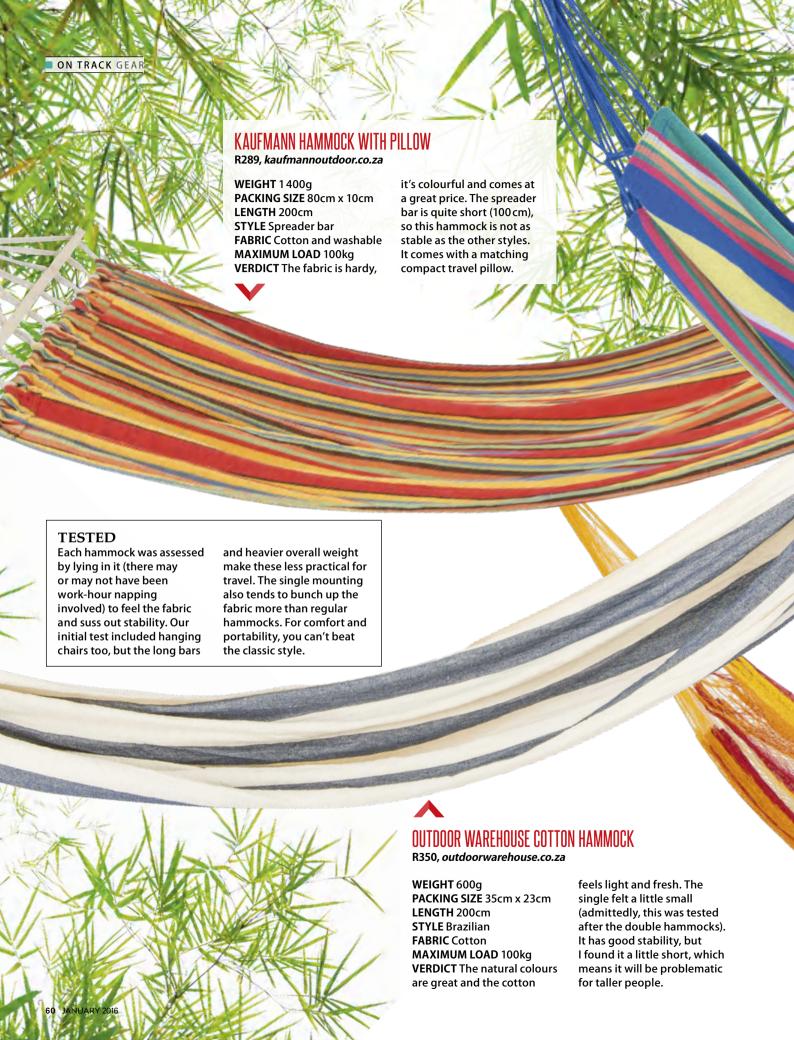
GEAR

TRIED-AND-TESTED PRODUCTS



MAXIMUM LOAD 200kg

double option (pictured).









Kym and **Tonya Illman** are passionate wildlife photographers from Perth, Australia. These up-close-and-curious images are from their just-released book Africa on Safari

The Illmans spend about three months a year photographing Africa and its wildlife, using a variety of photographic aids. This and the following images were taken using a camera buggy. Its small size makes it less threatening, and animals approach it curiously, although not without caution. This capture was a lucky strike buffaloes are often in dense bush, but this group was in open grassland in the Masai Mara. One of the group approached the buggy, almost touching it with its nose. The DSLR camera is secured inside, in a green waterproof housing, which protects it from almost anything. However, the buggy itself is a little more fragile, says Kym.



This group of wild dogs was captured near Kiba Point, a private camp in Tanzania's Selous Game Reserve. They were eager to identify what the buggy was: friend, foe or food, and they sniffed the ground it had traversed for clues.









SAVUTI MARSH

GETAWAY DEPUTY EDITOR, TYSON JOPSON

The best place for wildlife is around the Savuti Marsh in Chobe National Park. It's a relic of a large inland lake, now fed by the erratic Savuti Channel. Birds, ellies and antelope are all drawn to the waterholes and wetlands. So, too, are predators. Leopards stalk prey on the muddy marsh banks, lions have been known to take down elephants here, packs of wild dog and hyena are regularly seen feasting on kills and cheetahs glide beneath the long grass, looking for opportunity. Spend more than two days driving the network of sandy 4x4 roads around this area and you're guaranteed action.

BEST TIME TO GO May to September DO IT Camping at Savuti Camp is R215 pp. +267-686-5365, sklcamps.com >



SA STATS

Figures released by Stats
South Africa show that
camping sites and caravan
parks made a whopping
48 per cent more income
in August 2015 than they
earned in August 2014 (the
next highest increase was
11,8 per cent for guest
houses and game farms).
With the rand in its pitiful
state, we predict this trend
will stay for 2016.

AUGRABIES FALLS, NORTHERN CAPE

GETAWAY GEAR EDITOR, MELANIE VAN ZYL

I've always loved the desert. The calm and isolation of the arid Northern Cape landscape is interrupted only by dassies and the great noise, or *Aukoerebis* as the Khoi used to call this powerful tumble of Orange River water carving its way through the rocks. A sprawling network of viewpoints offers different sunset spots and the stars reinforce the sense of immense space once twilight is through. The facilities are immaculate and the camp is tranquil, with quiver trees silhouetted against the sunset. The falls light up at night and there are plenty of trails and space to keep busy, plus it's a photographer's dream.

BEST TIME TO GO April to September DO IT Camping is from R215 pp. 012-428-9111, sanparks.org



KRUGER (AND STAY AT THIS REVAMPED CAMP)

TRAVEL WRITER, MELISSA SIEBERT

The best way to experience Pafuri, Kruger's magnificent northernmost section is on foot with a knowledgeable guide. Walks traverse fairy-tale riverine forests and bushveld, and there's an abundance of game and a great ratio of people to place. It's still pristine, not overrun. The good news is guided walks in Pafuri, specifically its Makuleke Concession area along the Luvuvhu River, are now available through two very different places to stay: the renovated luxury Pafuri Camp (closed in 2013 due to flooding and reopened late last year) and Trails Camp, a simpler, more affordable option for those wanting a three-day bush walking adventure.

BEST TIME TO GO May to October **DO IT** The renovated Pafuri Camp has 19 tents: 12 are luxury twoperson tents and seven are family tents accommodating up to four people. From R2750 pp, including meals and two activities daily (game drives or walks), or R10 750 for a three-night luxury walking trails package. Alternatively, Trails Camp is from R5 458 pp for three nights. No under 12s permitted. 011-646-1391, returnafrica.com

'There's a lot of variety and a high concentration of trails (more than 16) in close proximity to one another'

Mountain biking in the Natal Midlands can be as relaxing or challenging as you want it to be. Here, deputy editor Tyson Jopson descends the tricky 'Super Tubes' section in the Kamberg.

RELAXING ACTION

RIKE

NATAL MIDLANDS, KWAZULU-NATAL

GETAWAY DEPUTY EDITOR, TYSON JOPSON

If your idea of relaxing includes dirt, sweat and gears then the Natal Midlands needs to be on your 2016 hit list. There's a lot of variety and a high concentration of trails (more than 16) in close proximity to one another. Rides range from short, five-kilometre familyfriendly meanders such as at Glengarry Holiday Farm and Kamberg Nature Reserve, to more challenging routes such as at Karkloof MTB Trails and the big one - Sani Pass Classic. There's also a fair share of technical downhill sections for the extremists and no matter where you're riding, the scenery is always spectacular.

BEST TIME TO GO Year-round **DO IT** Most trails charge for a day pass, which starts from R30 pp. See tiny.cc/midlandsmtbtrails for a list of trails in the area. Stay at Midlands Cottages, there's a forest trail on its doorstep and others not too far away. From R495 pp sharing. 082-445-7397, midlandscottages.co.za

HIKE

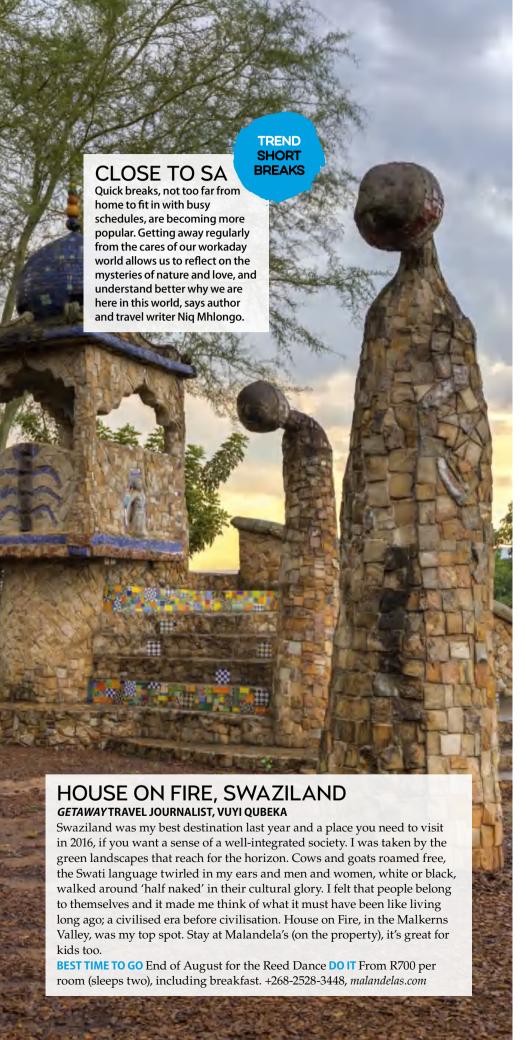
KAGGA KAMMA NATURE RESERVE, CEDERBERG

GETAWAY ONLINE EDITOR, KATI AULD

The Swartruggens mountain range is the epitome of unhurried nature and exploring the maze of columns and crevasses on foot is the best way to explore it. At Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve, there are four hiking routes that wind through riverbeds and past ancient rock art and almost-unrealistic rock formations home to dassies that bark down at you through the silence. After a walk, return to the cool of an air-conditioned thatched hut, watch the sunset lick across the vast plains of bossies, and enjoy a gourmet meal with the sense that you deserve it.

BEST TIME TO GO Year-round

DO IT From R2233 pp, including all meals and two activities. 021-872-4343, *kaggakamma.co.za* >



SHORT BREAKS

MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE

TRAVEL WRITER, NIQ MHLONGO

Maputo may never match the beauty of Durban, but during the Easter and Christmas seasons its beaches are generally less congested and quieter (although in 2012 my friends were forced to sleep inside the car because they could not get accommodation). The ocean is calm (you can walk - or swim - several metres in), there's a great beachside ambience and fantastic prawns. Also, for northern Gauteng and Mpumalanga holidaymakers, it's actually closer than Durban, and flights from Johannesburg take about an hour.

BEST TIME TO GO Peak season in SA

DO IT Return flights from Johannesburg are from R4 555. Rooms at Hotel Cardoso are from R2 932 (sleeps two). 013-751-2220, hotel-cardoso.com

SHORT BREAKS

VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

TRAVEL WRITER, NIQ MHLONGO

Every time I think of getting away, an image of a sign carved on stone with the words 'Welcome to Mosi-oa-Tunya, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe' comes to mind. I have visited five times, and fallen in love unconditionally. It's a place of dreams and realities and that larger-than-life bronze statue of David Livingstone overlooking the falls says it all. A two-hour sunset cruise along the Zambezi River gives me the power to think, laugh, imagine, create, plan, write and speak. The sound of the crushing water from Horseshoe Falls has the ability to heal, and with ghostly birds singing among the green leaves, it's the ideal place to meditate. **BEST TIME TO GO** February and May after the summer rains. **DO IT** Entrance to Vic Falls National Park is R280 pp. +263-470-6077, zimparks.org

SEMONKONG LODGE, LESOTHO

TRAVEL WRITER, KEITH BAIN

The high-altitude town of Semonkong, central Lesotho, brims with promise. It's connection to the outside world has improved thanks to the tarring of the twisty road there, but it still feels gloriously remote. Home of Basotho cowboys and close to the highest single-drop waterfall in Africa, Maletsunyane Falls, it has all the trappings of an Old West frontier town: the market even has wooden posts for riders to tie up their horses. Stay at Semonkong Lodge (great food even for vegetarians!) and make arrangements for various adventures, and if you're brave enough, sign up for the world's longest single-drop abseil, which happens right next to that almighty waterfall.

BEST TIME TO GO In summer **DO IT** From R430 pp sharing.
+266-27-006-037, semonkonglodge.com





ADVENTURES

IN OUR OWN CITIES

GETAWAYTRAVEL JOURNALIST, VUYI OUBEKA

Urban tourism is a global trend and there's a particular interest in urban regeneration. In Africa, Joburg is leading the way, and innercity hoods such as Braamfontein and Maboneng are turning into flourishing tourist attractions. But it's not stopping there. Here are two (relatively) relaxing tours to try: BIKE THE TEXTURED STREETS of Troyeville, take in its history and enjoy the galleries and eateries. DO IT Every Saturday and Sunday. From R180 for a tour. 011-614-0163, mainstreetwalks.co.za **FILL A BASKET WITH YOUR EATS** from Market on Main (at your own cost), climb the Carlton Centre and have a picnic on the roof. DO IT R200 for the experience. Eats from Market on Main at own cost. 011-614-0163, mainstreetwalks.co.za

OFF-THE-GRID

BOESMANSKOP, KRUISRIVIER

TRAVEL WRITER, KEITH BAIN

Boesmanskop, at a crossroads hamlet known as Kruisrivier, is made for deep chilling. Tinie Bekker farms with ostriches and tobacco and there are a handful of dairy cows helping to provide the soundtrack. But it's what he's done with the restored buildings – transforming two spaces (one the size of a small ballroom) into beautiful accommodation filled with his personal style and genuine charm and hospitality (he even cooks for you, and loves nothing more than chatting after he's served

you dinner or plied you with breakfast and strong coffee). It's like being welcomed into a farmer's home and then discovering he has a network of artist friends (who've helped supply canvases for his walls), a love of quality antique furniture and a penchant for design. Nothing is put on or fancy... you just fall into a rhythm of life that's far from the mainstream and totally unacquainted with the maelstrom. **BEST TIME TO GO** August, September **DO IT** Rooms from R375 pp sharing (the room above the pool is best). 072-669-5777, tiniebekker@mweb.co.za



OFF-THE-GRID

BULUNGULA, WILD COAST

TRAVEL WRITER, KEITH BAIN

In the too-brief time I spent at this faraway, off-grid eco-backpackers' lodge (consisting of a handful of rondawels, shared rocket-powered showers and a den-like communal lounge and kitchen area), I felt lifetimes lift from my shoulders. There was an in-room massage given by one of the women from the local village, and a walkabout to meet some of the residents, but mostly, we sprawled out on the grass outside someone's home and shared smiles and sips of homemade beer with the old women who pressed me to know why I wasn't married. Then I walked alone along a castaway beach littered with driftwood and whalebones. I could have continued forever. The waves were big and noisy and most of the time all I saw were cows lazing on the sand, occasionally a villager's hand waving from a distance before its owner disappeared behind a rolling, grass-covered hill. The sky was vast and blue, and when the sun disappeared, it transformed into a glittering inky canvas across which meteorites careened ceaselessly. How often is the chance to get lost in time and space available to us? Here, I thought, I was willing to surrender completely.

BEST TIME TO GO May to June DO IT From R390 for a hut (sleeps two). 047-577-8900, bulungula.com >

SOUTH AFRICA

Retreats focusing on meditation, silence or yoga are on the increase. This is part of the growing Mindfulness Movement and a great way to get back to core values.

POPLAR GROVE, KAROO

TRAVEL WRITER, KEITH BAIN

Poplar Grove, roughly 30 kilometres from Colesberg, is a place where you can escape the world and immerse yourself in silent contemplation. It starts, I guess, simply by 'being' in an archetypal landscape - the Karoo's vast emptiness. Part of the meditation here is mindful, silent contemplation of the semi-desert surrounds, far-off horizons, ironstone hills and distant clumps of trees; paying attention to everything, cultivating awareness of every experience and action, being fully present. You discover the liberating, healing power of space - and silence - and find it's totally transformative, aiding the disentanglement from everyday patterns and quietening the mind, making it possible to 'let go' and observe each moment of existence without needing to do much. **BEST TIME TO GO** The next few retreats are scheduled for 19 - 28 March, 23 - 30 April and 30 December - 7 January 2017. **DO IT** From R450 pp per night for a seven-day retreat (including vegetarian meals). 051-753-1356, stoepzen.co.za



MELODY HILL RETREAT, MAGALIESBERG

PROFESSIONAL REVIEWER, PIPPA DE BRUYN

For spiritual and physical wellness, this forested estate on the banks of the Magalies River (near the funky Blackhorse Brewery) is tranquillity realised. Guests can book the retreat as a whole and self cater, or attend an organised event. Check out the online calendar for events such as Fairy Godmother Training Retreat, Emotional Freedom or the 180-hour Level 1 Teacher Training in Kundalini Yoga that promises to 'fill your longing for the sacred'.

BEST TIME TO GO Retreats take place year-round

DO IT From R4 000 – R5 500 for groups of 12 or less with exclusive use (takes up to 30 people sharing). Teacher training in Kundalini Yoga costs R6 950 for four-and-a-half days of training, including food and accommodation. 082-806-7822, *melodyhillretreat.co.za*



TRAVEL

SOUTH AFRICA

It has been a growing travel movement to look for experiences that access real places and real people, no bells and whistles put on for tourists.



KASSIESBAAI, ARNISTON

TRAVEL WRITER, KEITH BAIN

I recently stayed at Kassiesbaai B&B – the only 'guest house' in the heritage-protected fishermen's village part of Arniston. What an experience! You're staying in Lorna and Edwin Agnew's home, with their talking parrot and their family photos and their preferred TV channels and their visiting neighbours and their honest commentary on what's happening – in the village and in the world. Their polite, intelligent gossip reveals the secret workings and hidden dilemmas of their community. They call friends over to have a chat with you so you can meet people on their own terms, and then they ask if you'd like to wake up early to join Edwin when he goes down to the jetty – because, although he's retired, Edwin is now a passionate fisherman who spends his day at sea with other breadwinners in the community. And at the appointed time, once you've returned from watching the boats launch, Lorna makes you a wonderful breakfast. All from the heart and honest and unpretentious, while at the Arniston Spa Hotel a busload of tourists are just about all you'll experience (for around R1600 for a room) which seems to be part of another world.

BEST TIME TO GO November to March

DO IT From R300 pp, including breakfast. 028-445-9966, 084-593-1699.



HONEY BEE SUITE, GANSBAAI TRAVEL BLOGGER, ROXANNE REID

Gansbaai, two hours from Cape Town, was recently declared best destination in the World Responsible Tourism Awards in London. My favourite place to chill in the area is the eco-friendly, off-grid Honey Bee Suite in the indigenous Platbos Forest, where more than 22 000 trees have been planted in the last 10 years. Through conservation stewardship, CapeNature is helping manage the forest and find ways to benefit local communities. Guests can walk the forest trails, relax in a hammock, listen to the birds (you may even meet a bushbuck or tree frog) and enjoy the open-air shower. **BEST TIME TO GO** September to early November







Glory on the Zambezi River. With seeming disdain, this maelstrom of surging water in the Batoka Gorge has tossed our 16-foot inflatable raft, together with eight grown men aboard, into the pale blue skies of Zimbabwe.

On the International Scale of River Difficulty from 1 to 6, a Grade 1 rapid is the easiest to raft: 'Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training.' A Grade 5 rapid comes standard with this warning: 'Extremely long, obstructed, or very violent. Drops may contain large, unavoidable waves and holes.'

Morning Glory (Rapid 4) is a Grade 5 – and don't we know it. The raft flips like a pancake tossed in a frying pan, front over end, and all eight of us, including our river guide, are thrown out.

I fall backwards into the rapid. Immediately I'm ripped under the surface. I don't know which way is up or down. It doesn't matter, because no matter how hard I try to move, I'm crushed by water as heavy as molten lead. My body is wrenched, twisted and stretched. My life jacket – clearly critical to my safety – seems to have no obvious influence on my buoyancy. All I can see is a maelstrom of blinding white bubbles. But it's the noise that scares me most. The booming sounds of liquid hitting rock reverberate through my skeleton, shaking my bones.

As if playing with a human yo-yo, the river flings me up into the air, then pulls me underwater. I gasp for air but water floods my throat. I start choking and try to stay calm. Then, bored with the games, the Zambezi spits me out perfunctorily



into calmer water and I float downstream. I cough and splutter and draw deep breaths of sweet air.

Half terrorised, half ecstatic, the first thing I see is the pale blue sky of Zimbabwe, and I whisper a few prayers. The next thing I see is our river guide. Tatani Shoko has reboarded our raft and is pulling us out of the water, one by one, halfdrowned rats clinging to our ship.

'It's good to be alive,' he chuckles. 'Don't worry, I've been doing this for 12 years and I've never lost anyone.'

I wonder whether Tatani is either mad or well connected with the Big Guy upstairs. Surely you'd have to be one or the other to do this almost every day for 12 years? During the rafting tourism season when water levels are low enough, usually from August to December, local river guides navigate these rapids – and their own mortality – every single morning.

But there's no time to think, because no sooner are we all back on the raft, than the next rapid approaches. And its name does nothing to calm my nerves.

'This one's known as Stairway to Heaven [Rapid 5],' a grinning Tatani shouts to us above the cacophony of the approaching raft-eater. 'It's another Grade 5, so hold on tight and see you on the other side!'

THE RAPIDS

The Zambezi is the fourth largest river in Africa. It starts in Zambia and passes through Angola, before flowing across the vast plateau of central Southern Africa on the northern border of Zimbabwe.

Above Victoria Falls, the river is broad and steady and nice enough, with houseboats serving snacks and sundowners, and hippos and elephants trundling along the shorelines. Then, as >



'ALL I CAN
SEE IS A
MAELSTROM
OF BLINDING
WHITE
BUBBLES.
BUT IT'S
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THAT SCARES
ME MOST'

THIS PAGE Big rock, lots of water and a few humans on a tiny raft. It's humbling to be at the mercy of the Zambezi River as it powers its way through a fault line in the 180 million-year-old basalt rock. OPPOSITE An angel's view of Victoria Falls and the Batoka Gorge, looking west towards the town of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

'IF EVER
THERE
WAS AN
EXAMPLE
OF GRAVITY,
THIS IS
IT: AN
AVERAGE
OF 3000
TONS OF
WATER
FALLING
EVERY
SECOND'

THIS PAGE The Zambezi
has its way with a few
terrorised humans on Rapid 5,
known as Stairway to Heaven.
OPPOSITE The building of the dam
means the rafting industry would
all but disappear and more than
100 river guides – including (back
row, from left) Gideon Dube,
Captain Frank, Kazibert Muposiwa,
Mfundisi Nowake and (front row,
from left) Fani Shoko, Nkulumo
Ndlovu and Tatani Shoko – may
lose their livelihoods.





if bored with all the pleasantries, the geological gods start getting mischievous. After flowing for hundreds of kilometres without much interruption, the river encounters a two-kilometre-long crack in the basalt geology. The mighty Zambezi can only go one way. If ever there was an example of gravity, this is it: an average of 3 000 tons of water falling every second into a 100-metre-high gorge below.

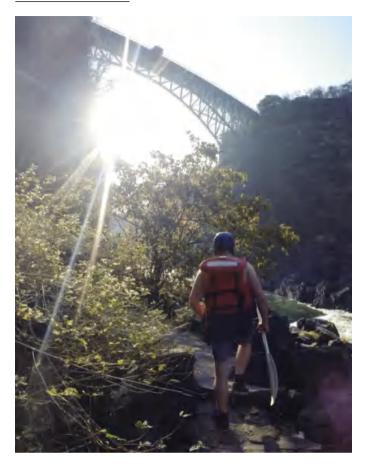
Call it whatever you want: Victoria Falls, Mosi-oa-Tunya, The Smoke That Thunders ... it is the largest sheet of falling water in the world, a World Heritage Site, a national park, and a truly wild place that must be seen to be believed. During low-water levels, water flow averages around 600 tons per second. During flooding, that figure can exceed 10 000 tons. That's 10 million kilograms of water every second. Every single drop of this water is forced into the Batoka, a chasm just 100 metres wide. Welcome to the finest white-water rafting on the planet.

The rapids in these narrow depths are the stuff of legend. David Livingstone may have been the first European to 'discover' the falls in 1855, but it took another 126 years for someone to pluck up the courage – or madness – to run the river below.

In 1981 a crazy American river guide from Colorado with the fabulous name of Richard Bangs pioneered the river. Since then hundreds of thousands of tourists have opted for the legendary one-day trip, guided by rivermen such as Tatani, a brave man who dices with death daily.

Starting just below Victoria Falls and ending about 24 kilometres downstream, the 25 rapids come quickly, one after the other, the densest concentration of white water in the world. The river drops 120 metres over this distance, and there are seven Grade 5 rapids, each one a tough taskmaster. Rapid number 9 is Grade 6 and unrunnable so rafters porter around it. Its name, Commercial Suicide, is apt.

'There is no other white-water rafting like it in the world,' explained Andrew Kellett, a professional kayaker who first rafted the rapids in 1994 and now mentors many of the current guides. 'It's simply unique and one of those things that every adventurer must do at least once in their lives.' >



'IF THE
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HARM THE
AREA'S
RIVERBASED
TOURISM'

After an uproar from local tourism companies, a new contour level of 740 metres was suggested. Even then, all rapids from number 8 down would be flooded by the dam.

'If the Batoka Gorge
Dam goes ahead,' explains
Rudo Sanyanga, the Africa
Program director for
International Rivers, 'it would
severely harm the area's
river-based tourism, it would
partly flood the Victoria Falls
Unesco World Heritage Site
and destroy crucial habitat
for endangered bird species
like the Taita falcon.'

Hydroelectric power in the region has come under scrutiny from climate experts, who say that rainfall in the catchment area could fall by between 25 and 40 per cent in the next few decades.

'This could seriously jeopardise the Batoka Gorge Dam's power output,' said Rudo, who has a PhD in

aquatic ecology. She also notes that it's unlikely the dam's construction will supply jobs to locals, as most employment will go to foreigners with niche skills. Whatever jobs are created for locals, opportunities will be limited once construction is finished.

Yet the white-water rafting industry as we know it will be gone forever. About 50 000 tourists come to Victoria Falls every year to raft the rapids, and the industry employs about 400 people in Zimbabwe and 300 in Zambia. The detrimental knock-on economic effect could extend to other businesses.

The day after my rafting trip with Tatani, I catch up with him in town and ask him what he thinks of the proposed dam. He looks at me, and his trademark smile turns into a frown.

'If I lose my job, what am I going to do? Tourism is everything here,' he tells me. 'There's no other work. And what about the river? It's a free river at the moment. And it supports me and my family. I don't want that to change.' •

TAMING THE WILD WATERS

But the time for adventure is running out. The wildest waters in Africa are in danger of being tamed. A new dam is planned for construction, about 50 kilometres downstream of Victoria Falls. The reason? Electricity is in short supply, and the hydroelectric power from the proposed 1600-megawatt Batoka Gorge Dam would feed into the Southern African Power Pool, a regional electricity network for Southern African Development Community countries.

It's not a new idea. Back in the 1970s, governments wanted to build a hydroelectric dam on the Zambezi at Mupata Gorge east of Mana Pools National Park, another World Heritage Site that consequently would have been flooded. Communities and conservationists campaigned successfully against that dam, citing the destruction of some of the most spectacular wildlife areas on the continent.

In the 1990s Zambia and Zimbabwe turned their eyes to the Batoka Gorge, but they couldn't agree on the terms. Then in 2012, the two governments signed a memorandum to go ahead. The environmental and social impact assessments are under way, and if all goes according to schedule, then the dam – at an estimated cost of between R86 and R172 billion – will be finished by 2025.

The proposed dam wall will be 181 metres high, and the dam will probably flood the gorge for 26 kilometres upstream along a contour line of 757 metres above sea level. This means that almost 19 of the 25 rapids would be flooded, back to rapid number 6, seriously crippling the white-water rafting industry.

RAISE YOUR VOICE

To register as an interested stakeholder in the environmental and social impact assessment currently under way, and to contribute comments and objections to the proposed Batoka Gorge Dam, e-mail Environmental Resource Management on batokagorgehes@erm.com.

LIVINGSTONE T1 VICTORIA FALLS BATOKA GORGE RAPID 1 PROPOSED DAM WALL VICTORIA FALLS RAPID 8 ZAMBIA RAPID 25 8A ZIMBABWE THIS PAGE The view of Victoria Falls and the Batoka Gorge from Devil's Cataract. **OPPOSITE** Walking down the gorge to start rafting.

PLAN YOUR TRIP

GETTING THERE

Air Zimbabwe, British Airways, South African Airways and FlyAfrica all fly to Vic Falls from Joburg. Tickets start from R2 500 return. airzimbabwe. aero, britishairways.com, flysaa.com, flyafrica.com. Or take to the road and drive via Botswana. Avoid Beitbridge, the queues at the border post are horrendously long.

WHEN TO GO

Low-water season is between August and December. September and October is best. In dry years, the river can be rafted all year round.

DO THIS

The two recognised white-water rafting companies in Victoria Falls town are Wild Horizons and Shearwater. Both are respected for high-quality guides and stringent safety standards. It costs R2 210 pp for the one-day rafting trip that passes through 20 rapids, from 7am – 2pm. wildhorizons.co.za, shearwatervictoriafalls.com

NEED TO KNOW

You don't need previous rafting experience, but you do need to be a good swimmer. Life jackets and helmets are supplied. The sun is intense, so take sun cream for your face, neck, arms and legs. You undertake the rafting at your own risk.

STAY HERE

The new Bayete Guest Lodge is the best B&B in Victoria Falls. Central yet quiet and personalised, owners Mike and Alex Johnson have created a centre of hospitality excellence. From R1 150 pp sharing. bayeteguestlodge.com

*Prices and conversions correct at time of going to print

Visit getaway.co.za for a full guide on where to stay and what to do and eat in Victoria Falls







SOME PEOPLE TRAVEL FOR SIGHTS, I TRAVEL FOR ICONIC DISHES AND INGREDIENTS.



ABOVE Pumpkin-filled pasta dressed with butter and Parmesan at Trattoria La Buca. **RIGHT, FROM TOP** The Enzo Ferrari Museum in Modena, built around the house where Enzo grew up and his father's workshop; inside the Parma Cathedral, known for the Assumption of the Virgin fresco by Antonio da Correggio. **OPPOSITE** The ageing room at Trattoria La Buca with its housemade culatelli hanging from the rafters. Ageing is essential in the production of Parmesan, Parma ham, culatello and traditional balsamic vinegar. So I planned a road trip to taste all the greats Emilia Romagna is famous for: fresh pasta rich with egg yolks, Parmigiano-Reggiano, Parma ham, ragù alla Bolognese (Bolognese sauce). Only I quickly discovered there are others that seldom make it out of this wealthy northern region, that can only be found, tasted – and understood – in situ.

Driving from Milan in the direction of Bologna, I followed the A1 highway (what the Romans once called the Via Emilia) and veered off towards Emilia Romagna's borders – the Po River in the north and the Apennine Mountains in the south. These days gourmands make a beeline for Modena and chef Massimo Bottura's Osteria Francescana. But I had it on good authority that I should start in Zibello.

Tortelli

Town is a big word for Zibello (there are about 2000 inhabitants), but here's why you go: a local charcuterie called Culatello and Trattoria La Buca. La Buca's owner, Miriam Leonardi, is the fifth generation in a line of women keeping her family's recipes alive and I read about her pasta in Bill Buford's book

Heat. After tasting her tortelli, he writes, his life was 'in a small but enduring way, never the same'. There was no question – I booked for Sunday lunch. And her Tortelli di Zucca altered my life too.

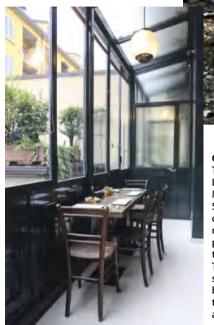
This pasta, as yellow as the table underlays, was filled with pumpkin reduced to such a sweet-savoury intensity that for a moment, time stood still. Until, as if staged for my benefit, an unmistakable engine roar broke my reverie. A red Ferrari crunched the gravel next to me. Out stepped a tall, tanned woman with bleached blonde hair. In that very moment Bottura's oft-quoted line was manifested: 'This is the land of fast cars and slow food.'

Later on, in Rosso, one of Trattoria La Buca's guest rooms, I gazed through the insect screen at the lazy, hazy afternoon light. Somewhere in the distance I heard tunes >

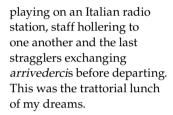




TRAVEL ITALY



CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT
The breakfast room at
LaFavia four rooms in
Milan; Chef Massimo
Spigaroli makes his
culatello from Parma's
native breed of black
pig; as culatello is drier
than Parma ham, at
Trattoria La Buca it's
served with curls of
butter for spreading
thickly on bread as an
accompaniment.



Aged culatello Culatello di Zibello

Culatello di Zibello immediately took precedence over Prosciutto di Parma (Parma ham) when I realised it's near impossible to find outside Italy – and some connoisseurs say it's best eaten on the foggy banks of the Po River, where it is made. The place to do this is chef Massimo Spigaroli's Castle of Culatelli, Antica Corte Pallavicina, in Polesine Parmense, less than five kilometres from Zibello proper.

There are a few good reasons to do this – mine were: Massimo keeps the likes of Anthony Bourdain and Prince Charles in culatello (and if it's good enough for them...) and he pushes the ageing process, which isn't easy since culatello is cut from the heart of the leg so there's little fat and it's prone to drying out. His successes are reserved for savouring on the property.

The manager, Giovanni Lucchi, took us cycling around the farm and – with typical Italian flair – changed from jacket and tie to rolled up sleeves and sunglasses before mounting an Abici bike. We entered the ageing cellar and it smelt of chocolate and Armagnac. Although I'm sure I was starting to smell decidedly porcine.

I noticed the wide-open windows inviting in the muggy microclimate – my ankles attacked by squadrons of mosquitoes as a consequence – and the culatelli's feathery mould growth fluttering in a slight breeze. I could imagine why customs officials wouldn't take kindly to this. More reason to appreciate every 48-month-aged slice I tasted.

Gnocco fritto

By now the platters of salumi (the umbrella term for salami, prosciutto, pancetta crudo, coppa and culatello) had induced a permanent thirst and I felt rather grateful for a visit to Parma's pink marble Baptistery and Duomo (cathedral) - both for the illusionistic frescoes and the opportunity to confess sins of gluttony. But my devotion was short-lived and by breakfast I'd struck up a food conversation with Pio B&B owner, Massimo Mezzadri.

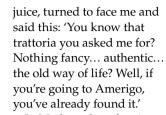
Massimo appeared to read me for clues when I asked for recommendations, explaining: 'Food is like football or women, it's a matter of personal taste.' Then I mentioned my last supper was booked at Amerigo, in Savigno. He stopped squeezing orange >



INSIDER TIP Eat culatello with your hands to inhale its perfume. It shouldn't be overtly salty but have a deep, balanced flavour.



CLOCKWISE, FROM RIGHT Room Atleta, one of the two rooms at Quartopiano Bed & Breakfast de Charme in Modena: Trattoria Bianca serves its gnocco fritto with salumi and jam made with cherries from the Vignola hills; the small-scale mills, dairies and salumerias supplying Trattoria Amerigo are located in the hilly landscape surrounding Savigno; Alberto Rettina's aunt, Marisa Vespucci, folding tortellini at Trattoria Amerigo.



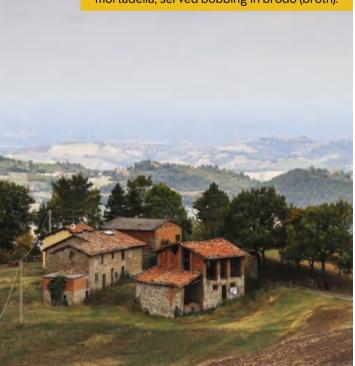
In Modena the salumi theme continued... with what may be my perfect food: gnocco fritto - light, puffed pillows of deep fried dough that are served warm and have a hollow cavity that I stuffed with shavings of Parma ham whenever an antipasto opportunity arose. And thanks to Antonio Di Resta, one of the owners at Ouartopiano in Modena, I learnt that tortellini - if they're any good - should be (at least) seven to a soup spoon.



Tortellini

Enjoying the smaller towns, I headed for Savigno in the Samoggia Valley, which is 30 kilometres southwest of Bologna. Having covered

FOODIE FACT Tortellini, the belly buttonshaped diminutives of tortelli are often filled with a paste of pork, veal, prosciutto and mortadella, served bobbing in brodo (broth).

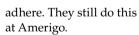




mostly agricultural flatlands, the lush hillsides offered the scenery I'd been hoping for. I felt the temperature drop, and around clusters of chestnut trees the smell of wood smoke lingered over piles of ash where people had been roasting chestnuts.

Savigno is bigger than Zibello (3000 inhabitants) and it's used as a base for white-truffle hunting (and eating). There's one main street and on it is Amerigo, a Slow-Food-endorsed trattoria run by Alberto Bettini and Marina Malavasi. Alberto doesn't cook the recipes of his grandparents, who started Trattoria Amerigo. He conceives his own, using ingredients from the surrounding hills and referencing local suppliers.

Dinner was everything I'd hoped. I knew it would be on tasting my first course. The pasta, though, is what captured my imagination. Purists insist pasta fresca should be rolled by hand on a wooden board using a long wooden rolling pin or matterello to achieve the right rough texture for sauce to



In the afternoon a team of women arrive with Alberto's mother, Guiliana Vespucci, to roll and roll and roll, and – once the dough is suitably elastic and thin – stuff and fold. Their tortellinis were indisputably the tiniest I ate on the entire trip. More so, these nonnas (Miriam included) made my holiday.

They hold culture in their fingertips. Venice may be sinking, but surely as important is to taste the food these women have been directly involved in – before the next generation takes over. **6**

PI AN YOUR TRIP



GETTING THERE

Emirates offers well-priced return flights to Milan from about R8 500. If you fly into Milan, it's worth overnighting before or after your road trip. emirates.com. We used Sunny Cars, a German rental broker/ aggregator operating in various European countries and offering a competitive all-inclusive rate (unlimited mileage, liability insurance and more) so there's no need to buy any extra insurance. For the Fiat 500 (or similar) category for the month of September 2015 we paid R493 per day and used about R800 worth of petrol getting from Milan to Bologna/Savigno. Prices vary according to country and season. sunnycars.com

WHEN TO GO

October – to coincide with Savigno's white-truffle season.

NEED TO KNOW

A basic understanding of Italian is essential. The speed limit between Milan and Bologna is 130km/h. Off the motorway, it ranges from 50-110km/h and is prone to sudden changes, and toll fees (up to R300) are common. GPS is vital, as missing highway turn-offs can result in lengthy setbacks. Special permission is generally required to enter and park in controlled zones in historic city centres. Check with your place of stay our B&Bs in Parma and Modena offered parking and registered our vehicle at the police station. Park-and-ride options are also available. To bus into Bologna for the day, park at Tanari parking lot (R30 per day) on the outskirts – the free bus journey into town is 30 minutes.

DO THIS Book a guided tour in Polesine Parmense as a day visitor at Antica Corte Pallavicina

Relais. From about R261 pp



including a taste of culatello. anticacortepallavicinarelais.com Visit Amerigo 1934 in Savigno. Ask about walks and bike trails, (bikes, maps and itineraries are free) winery visits (free), truffle hunting (from R780 for the truffle hunter, no more than eight people per hunt) and cookery classes (from R780 pp). amerigo1934.it

STAY HERE

LaFavia 4 Rooms, Milan, is

a well-run B&B with a tranquil roof garden where an organic breakfast is served. From R1 660 per room for two sharing, including breakfast. lafavia4rooms.com

Trattoria La Buca, Zibello,

has three neat-as-a-pin rooms opposite the trattoria for crashing after lunch or using as a base. Parking is plentiful. From R1 370 for two sharing. *trattorialabuca.com*

Antica Corte Pallavicina, Polesine Parmense, is for those who fancy frescos, towers and sleeping where nobility once did. From R2 159 for two people sharing, including breakfast. anticacortepallavicinarelais.com **Pio B&B, Parma**, is in the heart of the city with an owner passionate about food and wine. From R1 215 for two sharing, including breakfast. *piorooms.it*

Quartopiano Bed & Breakfast de Charme, Modena, has two small-but-charming rooms equipped with quality bed linen and spacious showers, and it's in an excellent location. From R2 126 for two people sharing, including breakfast. bbquartopiano.it

Amerigo 1934, Savigno, has five sensitively restored, eclectic rooms in one of the town's oldest stone buildings, and these are a few hundred metres from the trattoria. From R1 077 for two sharing. amerigo1934.it

EAT AND DRINK Trattoria La Buca, Zibello,

has some must-order dishes: culatello (R228), tortelli stuffed with ricotta and greens (R198) and mariola (poached salami) with mustard fruits and vinegar sabayon (R228). trattorialabuca.com

Tabarro wine bar, Parma, is for exploring regional grapes. Taste

the Donati Camillo Malvasia (sparkling white) and Antonio Aldini's Lambrusco (sparkling red). From R53 per glass. tabarro.net

Maison Mon Café, Modena,

is all about people watching and Italian classics with a contemporary execution. Dishes from R198. *mon-cafe.it* **Da Panino, Modena**, is a great panini café owned by Osteria Francescana manager Beppe Palmieri. 21 Rua Freda.

Trattoria Bianca, Modena, makes gnocco fritto and other traditional favourites. 24 Via G.B. Spaccini, Modena.

Trattoria del Borgo,

Monteveglio, is tucked away in the Abbey's Regional Park where owner Paolo Alessandra cooks from the heart.

trattoriadelborgomonteveglio.it

Trattoria Amerigo, Savigno, offers a traditional tasting menu (from R540) and seasonal- or white-truffle tasting menu (from R770). Order the tortelli filled with Parmesan cream and tossed with butter and Mora ham (R216). *amerigo1934.it*

*Prices and conversions correct at time of going to print





DEFI

Travelling for a purpose keeps growing as a trend. Getaway's Chris Davies takes a trip with a difference – an educational expedition on the Olifants River

two more projects you can engage with

t started as a doodle on a paper tablecloth five years ago. Now it's an award-winning education initiative that's already seen more than 15 000 kids pass through its Education Through Adventure programmes. It's called Explore4Knowledge and it's the reason I found myself sitting in a low cave on the banks of the Western Cape's Olifants River on a damp September evening in 2015.

A diesel generator thumped softly in the distance as the flickering light of a film projector bounced from a small screen onto a row of captivated faces. We were watching *The End of the Line*, a deeply disturbing documentary on the sad state of world fish stocks. It was the final night of the 'Water Warriors' expedition and the small group of students who'd been paddling and portaging from the mountains above Ceres were nearing their goal. The estuary and river mouth were just a few kilometres downstream and their 10-day, source-to-sea adventure was almost complete.

Two years of planning had gone into this moment, and although the students may not have noticed, their attentive silence and thoughtful post-film comments had made John Lucas, the project organiser, smile. It had been no simple feat to bring this all together – to arrange canoes and guides with Gravity Adventures, vehicles from Land Rover, food sponsorship from Pick n Pay, fuel from Total SA and gear from Cape Union Mart; not to mention daily talks and presentations from the Endangered Wildlife Trust, the Freshwater Research Centre, Ground Truth, >

CapeNature and WWF South Africa. It's a logistical juggle making projects such as this happen and he can only have been pleased at the students' keen response.

John began Explore4Knowledge in September 2011 after that inspired night of scribbling on the tablecloth in a Cape Town restaurant.

'I feel strongly that everyone can

and should leave a positive legacy,' he told me. 'This Water Warriors project has been a two-year dream, but it's just one of many we're fortunate to be able to run through the help of our sponsors and donors. I believe that if conservation has any future, it's essential to get kids out into the veld to learn an appreciation of

the environment. Most don't get that opportunity.'

In the almost five years that Explore4Knowledge has been running, upwards of 15 000 students have been touched by its Education Through Adventure projects and John has won numerous awards for his contribution to conservation and youth empowerment including the Enviropeadia Eco-Youth





Award, the SANParks Kudu Award and a gold President's Award. Although small in terms of student numbers, Water Warriors is by far his most ambitious undertaking to date, and one John hopes to grow in coming years.

'Next up is our Cederberg programme in March 2016,' he continued. 'That's our regular March project where we take grade six and sevens from local community schools, and grade 10 and 11s from Cape Town schools, on camps, workshops and hikes, clearing invasive species and teaching them about the local ecology.'

According to WWF's Klaudia Schachtschneider, who spoke to the 'warriors' earlier in the week, invasive species account for seven per cent of SA's annual freshwater run-off. Clearing these makes a big difference to the amount of water available to agriculture, and reduces the need for dams – something relevant on the Olifants where work is under way to raise the wall of its largest dam at Clanwilliam.

The health of the Olifants River system is of special interest to John who is doing his master's thesis on the elevated levels of heavy metals in the water, believed to be caused by plant fertilisers.

He feels that, for the most part, the river is still in reasonable shape, although vigilance is required to keep it that way. Reports of a failing sewage treatment plant near Citrusdal, as well as over-pumping by some farmers were his main concerns, and we discussed all this as we paddled serenely downstream,

falling slightly behind the more youthful efforts of the kids in front.

I had joined the expedition late, jumping in at the low-river crossing at Lutzville on the R362. Winter rainfall had been so poor (another major concern), and the water level so low, that the team had only been able to paddle properly since the previous day and everyone was enjoying the now widening waterway.

Fish were jumping and a pair of fish eagles soared on high. There were red bishops in the reeds and cormorants swimming under the boats, and it felt idyllic, tucked away on this little river that supported so much life.

We passed farm labourers fishing from the banks, farm pumps anchored between the reeds, and small communities with their fishing boats pulled up on slipways. A lot of people make use of our rivers, and in very different ways – something easy to see out on the waterways, but less obvious from a world where water is often just something that comes from a tap.

The students were singing as they paddled, and calling out to the people we passed. They were seeing it all for themselves too, in each case for the first time. I don't think the lesson was lost on them.

DO IT YOURSELF Join E4K's open events, which include cleaning rivers and removing alien vegetation. E4K is sponsor-based, but donations of money or equipment are always welcome. See *explore4knowledge.com*. >









2 more water projects to support in 2016

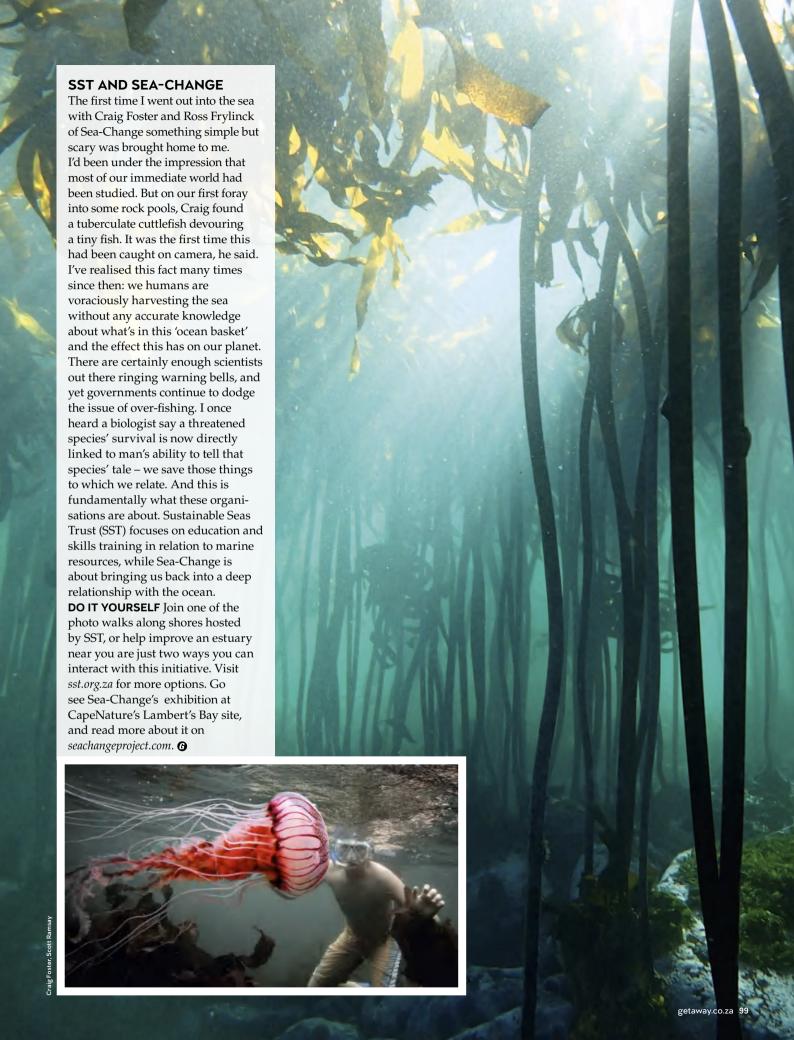
WWF JOURNEY OF WATER

Did you know that only eight per cent of South Africa's land area generates more than half of the country's water? Few people do, and so this is why spreading this message is vital and this is what Journey of Water's sole purpose is: to reconnect South Africans to their water source in order to protect it. The project kicked off in 2013 with a hike that took 24 people, including celebrity Derek van Dam, members of the public and ecologists and conservationists from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the University of Cape Town, from the source of the Berg River in the The Hottentots Holland Nature Reserve just outside Franschhoek to its final destination: the tunnels underneath Cape Town. The journey took four days and highlighted the biggest threat water in the Western Cape faces: pollution. According to Dr Jeanne Nel, principal scientist of biodiversity and ecosystems at CSIR, 80 per cent of the rivers in the region are critically endangered. The statistics in the rest



of the country are no better and led to Journey of Water embarking on a second campaign: a four-day trek from Highmoor Nature Reserve in the Drakensberg to Pietermaritzburg. Future journeys are planned with the aim to introduce more South Africans to the idea that saving water is a shared responsibility. Understanding that water does not simply come from a tap is the best chance we have of protecting it. **DO IT YOURSELF** The next Journey of Water hike is planned for 2016 in Gauteng. Visit journeyofwater.co.za to get involved. Donations can also be made at wwf.org.za/donate.





SHARPEN UP

KNIVES AND OTHER UNUSUAL TOOLS TO TAKE OUTDOORS THIS SUMMER. BY MELANIE VAN ZYL

BRIGHT IDEA

R190, campandclimb.co.za

The Morakniv Companion Colormix has a blade of Swedish cold-rolled stainless steel and a comfortable, rubberised handle for better non-slip grip. It's available in lots of bright colours, comes in a matching plastic sheath with a belt clip – and it's reasonably priced.



R120. vermontsales.co.za

The Diamond Mini-Sharp Sharpener comes on a key ring and is no bigger than a pack of gum. A folding handle protects the stone and the grit pad is available in varying coarseness. This simple knife sharpener can be used on utility knives, scissors and even the garden shears. A larger double-sided, dual-grit pad option is available for R912,68.

Did you know?

Blades can also be sharpened on a brick or unglazed porcelain, such as the rim of a toilet cistern lid. Emery boards, aluminium items and the unglazed ceramic ring found on the bottom of crockery also work well.

POWER TOOL

R295, builderswarehouse.co.za

The Stanley Quickslide Sport Utility Knife is a practical folding knife with a strong, sharp serrated blade made for both heavy-duty and general-purpose cutting. This hardy gadget also comes with a lifetime warranty.

CUTTING EDGE

R420, awesometools.co.za

Known for its classic woodenhandled knives, Opinel's Outdoor Knife is the heavy-duty alternative featuring a plastic handle and serrated blade.

Find the Opinel folding knife, which can open a wine bottle, and other great wine gadgets online at getaway.co.za/gear

LIVE BY The Sword

From R3800, swordcane.com

If you've already got all the pocket knives and multi-tools imaginable, this bespoke range of quality sword canes and hiking staffs is right up your alley. Burger Canes creates top-end MK3 and MK4 models with a range of custom handles and personalised engraving options. These strong, lightweight walking canes are designed for everyday use.

SIMPLE STEEL

R830, awesometools.co.za

The Leatherman Crater C33T is a folding knife that moonlights as a multi-tool. It has a sharp, high-carbon stainless steel blade, a bottle opener, a screwdriver and a carabiner to keep it clipped on. The knife folds to a length of just 10 centimetres.

WIN!

Kick your bush skills up a notch with the Morakniv Tactical SRT knife. Read our review upfront on page 21, visit getaway.co.za/competitions and answer the question below to win one of two fixed-blade knives worth R1 350 each.

Q: What is the blade made from?



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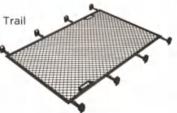




Add to your Thule Trail

Thule Load Net 8239/8249 Special loading net for Thule Trail

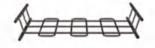
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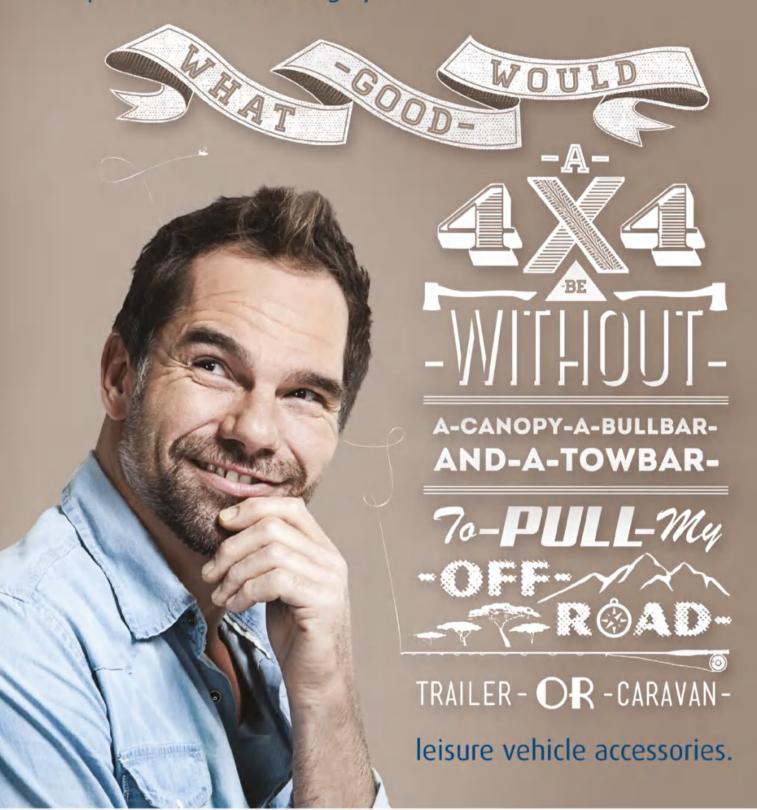
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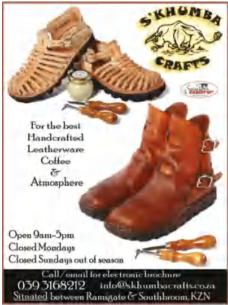
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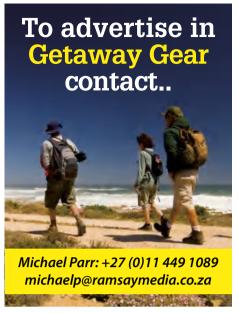
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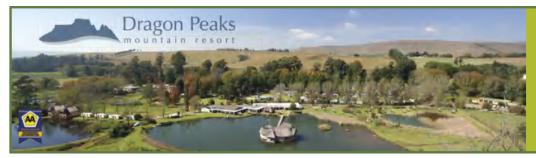
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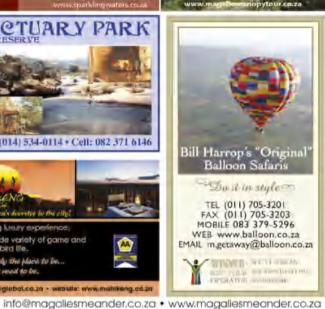
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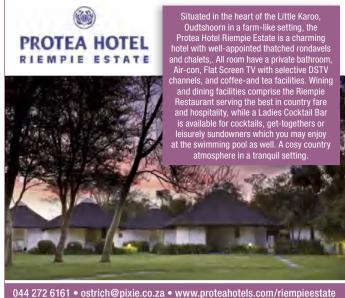


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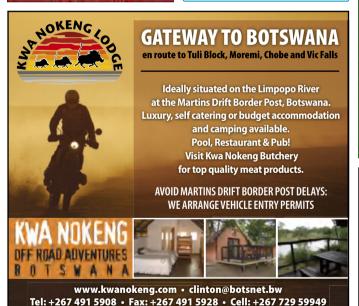






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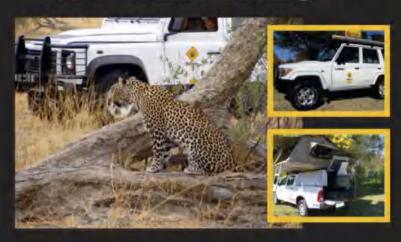








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'My colleague,
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cried when she
was [in the Cango
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many reasons.'

'd first met Sissy Fortuin the night before at Magic Moments, a dinnertheatre experience that's held in her home. Sissy is the main act. She sings jazz, African and Afrikaans material. Her partner Barry McGurk, with whom she shares the house, handles the keyboard (Barry plays seven instruments), and Joey Hefke prepares traditional dishes for guests and sings too; sometimes duets with Sissy.

The place was welcoming and inclusive. In the garden, I met locals Anne French-Kennerley, who works for St Luigi's Care Centre for children; a couple from Bongolethu, the nearby township; Monica Williamson who was the press officer at the British Embassy and who had worked with Mandela, plus three English guests. Monica's shoes were off, so I followed suit, and by the end of the evening we were all friends. That's how Barry and Sissy came to offer me a guided tour around Oudtshoorn. I took them up on it – it's always better to see a town through the eyes of a local.

Now, we're trekking up Swartberg Pass on the R328 along the northern edge of the semi-arid area of the Klein Karoo. 'This is where the black people used to stay when I was a child and where my mother grew up,' says Sissy pointing to the fields stretched out in front of us. Matjiesrivier is in a valley on the right, seen halfway up the mountain road.

'I remember the *Boesman* [San people]; very, very small men and they were fixing the path in the mid 1960s. As a four-year-old, we shared *haas* pies they had made. They were kind.' She contemplates a while. 'I don't know where they went.' She says one of them, a sangoma, made two small cuts on either side of her nose in order to protect her from evil spirits and bad actions, as she was an only daughter with six older brothers. Sissy's personal reflection contextualises the history here for me, and how much has changed.

The drive to Rust-En-Vrede Waterfall is breathtaking. On golden stretches of sand, mountains rise to kiss the blue sky in the distance. 'It looks like Ireland,' says Barry. He's a retired forensic and occupational psychologist consultant from Britain and carried out a lot of research in prisons all over the world, including in South Africa from 1994 onwards. I brake, the car rocks and dips as we make a left turn. We park



TOP LEFT The Cango Caves in the Swartberg Mountains are majestic and date back to the Early Stone Age. ABOVE The camels at Wilgewandel Holiday Farm understand Afrikaans and English and are very kissable ... as you can see. OPPOSITE, FROM TOP Ostriches in pose at Cango Ostrich Farm; Barry and Sissy in contemplation at the edge of Swartberg Pass.



On my fourth day I drove towards Cango Caves, stupefied by the views. The road was peppered with people hitch-hiking or walking long stretches; many here are poor.

The caves were unbelievably beautiful. My colleague Helen says she cried when she was down there. I did too, for many reasons. Sissy had told me her father, Cornelius, was the first non-white guide at the caves. He spoke English, Afrikaans and Dutch and worked there for 40 years. He loved the caves and his job. Sissy played hide and seek here as a child and also sang on the café tables for tourists and earned tips. She no longer goes to the caves because she's done it, and also, it's no longer free.

and climb up steel stairs within a forest. Water drifts beneath the bridge, and there's writing in the moss and bark of trees. Sissy sings as we near the sight, and it feels like a dream. The heat is just right. The waterfall is remote and tranquil, and the rock pools are clear – the way to cool off in the harsh Karoo climate. Mist falls on my face as the water cascades into the pools, and the cold of the rock beneath my feet moves up my body to my head. It sounds like peace here. We sit awhile. Breathe deeply. Once satisfied, we head for the couple's home and close off the day's journey with wine and Barry's signature chops. Soon I'm calling Sissy 'Auntie Sissy', and Barry calls me their surrogate daughter.

I'd marvelled at the sights of the Karoo on my drive from Cape Town, a long stretch of road, steady at 100km/h, arm resting on the open window, skin kissing the wind, my Champagne Polo chasing the horizon. I'd stopped a few times roadside, grabbed my snacks and begun to walk to enjoy the view from the top of one of the smaller foothills, but soon realised that the openness was all fenced.

I'd pushed on until I entered Oudtshoorn. The town was quiet. Now and again I'd spot a tourist bus, which was soon off again. The streets were clean, and the cathedral and Standard Bank buildings on Church Street were stunning architecturally. But it didn't feel welcoming to me. The CP Nel Museum spoke mostly about Afrikaans history, excluding Apartheid and only touching on the forced removals, place names were almost exclusively Afrikaans. People stared at me in some places, and as I entered Zwartberg View Mountain Retreat, the owner grabbed her dogs, 'because I know you're scared of dogs,' she said. 'Actually,' I replied. 'My family has owned many.' At dinner, her husband spoke about the benefits of Apartheid, the laziness of the workers in the townships, and his preference for European guests.

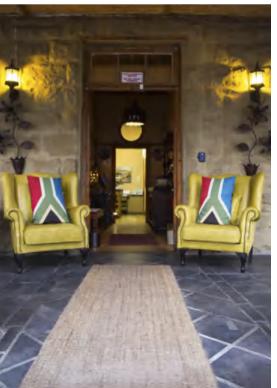


'The heat is just right. The wate<mark>rfall is</mark> remote and tranquil, and the rock pools are clear'

The following day, after a day of driving, I settled for a cheeseburger and chips at lunch on Wilgewandel Holiday Farm. The place made me miss my nieces and nephews and reminded me of Riversands Farm - 'the home of the chicken pie' – between Midrand and Fourways, that my mother always took us to. Parents and kids seemed equally at ease at Wilgewandel, and the setting was both fun-filled and safe. There are water slides, zip lines, donkey carts... all surrounded by mountains. Adults giggled nervously on camels; Afrikaans pop was blasting from a cell phone at a table behind me. It was a sweltering 35 degrees. It was the most integrated place I'd experienced so far, with more South Africans than foreigners, which had seldom been the case at most stops. >

On this last day, Sissy and Barry take me to Oudtshoorn's two townships, Bongolethu and Bridgton. Neither is highlighted in the tourist's maps provided. Sissy spent most of her life in Bridgton, the coloured township, where approximately 80 per cent of Oudtshoorn's population live. A further 10 per cent live in the black township of Bongolethu, and the rest in town. I wanted to see The Bongolethu Three Memorial, which honours three children who were killed by the police during an apartheid era demonstration. We pick up Joey who takes tours. There's a vibe here I missed in the town. Shops are painted in bright colours, even the funeral homes (there're a lot). Bongolethu has roughly 37 churches. Houses are tiny, gardens and spaces are well kept and beautiful. Some people live in steel containers, but I'm glad to get a full perspective of the area.

'Oudtshoorn is a tourist mainstay. It survives off tourism,' Anne had said. And it seemed true. It's a town that comes alive, especially during its festivals. But on an ordinary day, aspects of the town proper seemed cold towards me. It was on the outskirts that I found warmth and colour, in Sissy and Barry's open, lovely home and pleasant music, in the incredible nature, the soul in Bongolethu, the red rock, blue skies and cooling waterfalls. Ah... and especially the Cango Caves. Nature speaks and you can hear it clearly in Oudtshoorn.











CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The cathedral on Church Street is beautifully constructed and worth visiting; vintage bikes at CP Nel Museum take visitors back in time; the perfect spot for a glass and a book outside one of the bedrooms at Hlangana Lodge; a colourful entrance at The Black Swan restaurant – the ostrich steaks are excellent.

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It's a five-hour drive from Cape Town. Take the N1 to Worcester and then the R60 to Ashton. There the road becomes the popular R62 and takes you over Cogmanskloof Pass and through towns such as Montagu, Barrydale, Ladismith and Caltizdorp before coming to Oudtshoorn.

NFFD TO KNOW

You'll definitely need a car to experience Oudtshoorn. Points of interest are far from the town and some roads are gravel and tricky for smaller vehicles. It's doable but take it easy. I didn't see many taxis, though there are some, otherwise it's safe to walk at night.

DO THIS

Swartberg Pass is 1583 metres above sea level and I enjoyed powering the car up the steep road with stunning views. It's cold at the top, grab a jacket. 044-272-3332,

oudtshoorninfo.com

The Swartberg Trail has varying distances: two one-day trails of 7,4 and 8,4 kilometres; a twoday hike over 25 kilometres and a four-day hike of 46 kilometres. From R120 pp for the overnight huts. There's a conservation fee of R40 pp on all hikes.

021-483-0190, capenature.co.za **Bongolethu Three Memorial** is a simple, gated memorial at the centre of the township that pays tribute to three young boys. Following Youth Day celebrations on 17 June 1985, Fezile Hanse (14), Andile Majola (13) and Patrick Madikane (14) lost their lives when police opened fire on a group of youths protesting, 076-501-8685

The Heritage Tour at Cango **Caves** is extraordinary but it was packed with tourists and I could hardly hear the guide (who sang), so go early. It's R85 for adults and R50 for kids (5-17). Under 5s free. 044-272-7410, cango-caves.co.za

Tafeltjie & Wafeltjie en Mannetjie se Plek on the main road is antique and vintage heaven with reasonably priced gems such as vintage teaspoons and china. 044-272-2924, facebook.com/tafelnwafel Rust-En-Vrede Waterfall is concealed behind brackenclad heights and is a cool and peaceful respite with rock pools. The steel stairs are many and quite high so take care, R49 per car. oudtshoorninfo.com The Spa @ Buffelsdrift is a good choice after a day of adventuring. The Calabash Foot Treatment soothed my tired feet and included

buffelsdrift.com Cango Ostrich Farm is en route to the Cango Caves. Guided tours include educational talks on incubation, what they feed on and the products made from them. You can even ride one. R90 for adults, R55 for kids (6 -17). Under 6s free. 044-272-4623,

a foot scrub and massage

with scented oils. R170 for

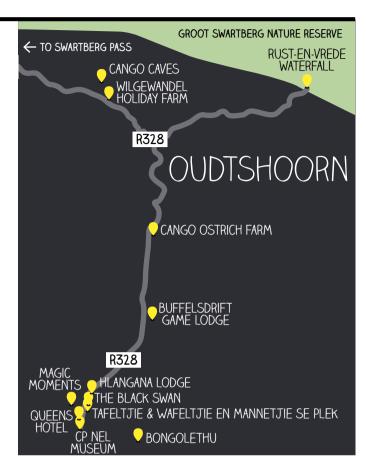
30 minutes. 044-272-0000,

cangoostrich.co.za

CP Nel Museum has several sections with an entire room dedicated to ostriches. The museum feels incomplete though, it doesn't reflect much about the forced removals or feature the San, who lived there. It houses a lot of memorabilia such as furniture, china and clothing from centuries ago. Entry is R20 pp. 044-272-7306, www.cpnelmuseum.co.za

A tour of Bongolethu can be arranged with Barry and Joey from Magic Moments. The tour takes up to four, and you'll have to have your own car for bigger groups. Tips are donated to a local charity such as St Luigi's Care Centre. R200 pp, R120 pp in your own car. Diners at Magic Moments go free. 076-501-8685, magicmomentsinoudts.com

Wilgewandel Holiday Farm is just the spot for kids to run free and parents to relax on the lawn or ride a camel. Entrance is free. Camel rides are R60 pp. 044-272-0878, wilgewandel.co.za



STAY HERE

Hlangana Lodge feels quite fancy yet understated. The lounge is homely, there's a lot of reading material and the pool outside is visible from all standard rooms, which is good if you have kids. From R700 pp, including a Champagne breakfast. 044-272-2299, hlangana.co.za

Queen's Hotel is the thirdoldest hotel in SA. Ornate trimmings, rich colours of maroon and gold and luxe-floral sofas complement dark woods, and the bar is grand. From R735 including breakfast. 044-272-2101,

queenshotel.co.za

Backpackers Paradise & Joyrides is cheap and cheerful and a good place to stay if you don't have a solid itinerary. The staff give great pointers and arrange bicycle tours and joy rides. From R150 pp for dorms and R480 for a room (sleeps two). 044-272-3436, backpackersparadise.net

EAT HERE

Buffelsdrift Game Lodge makes a mean salad of wood-fired masala chicken breast and mango for R75. Visitors can also take a two-hour game drive. R435 pp for adults, R217 for kids (4-12). 044-272-0000 Magic Moments is an intimate experience with live music, traditional food and bottomless drinks. R300 pp, including a CD. 076-501-8685

The Black Swan 'makes the best ostrich steak in Oudtshoorn', I was told. I can't confirm this, though it was damn good. R105 for 150g. The staff is well informed. 044-272-0982

The Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees takes place in Oudtshoorn from 24 - 30 March 2016. The festival is seven days of culture and arts, suitable for the whole family. kknk.co.za

*Prices correct at time of going to print

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